

'Syria, U.S. end dispute over embassy attack'

King issues directive on motorcade procedures

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Abdullah has instructed the Public Security Department (PSD) not to halt traffic to give way for his motorcade, according to a report in the Arabic daily Al Ra'i on Friday. The King said traffic should function normally and that his motorcade should abide by traffic rules like other vehicles. The late King Hussein had passed the same directives to the PSD.

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More rain expected today

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Meteorology Department Friday said rainfall is expected to continue today with partly cloudy conditions and cold weather. Daytime temperatures will reach a high of 10 degrees Celsius, dropping to a low of four at night in the eastern and western heights, from 13 to three in the Badia, from 17 to none in the Jordan Valley and from 18 to nine in Aqaba, according to the department.

'Demonic' twins escape death

BOGOTA (AFP) — Newborn twins from the U'wa tribe who risked being sacrificed by their tribe because of a belief that twins are demonic have been placed in the care of social workers, officials said Friday. The babies owe their lives to the fact that they were born in a clinic and were immediately placed in the care of officials, according to Juan Manuel Urrutia, director of family well-being. According to U'wa traditions, twins are regarded as evil and have to be put to death in order to protect the community from punishment by the gods. Ordinarily babies such as these are either drowned in a river or left to be eaten by ants, Oscar Tarazona, an expert on the U'wa Indians said.

Communist symbols draw wrath of community

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — A Vietnamese man whose store is under siege by anti-Communist protesters demanded police protection Friday so that he might return to his business to display Communist symbols. "The police say they will arrest me. That's my store. I have the right to go to my store," said Truong Van Tran, invoking his free-speech rights to hang the poster of Communist leader Ho Chi Minh and the Vietnamese flag. He made his remarks from the safety of the Los Angeles offices of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) after he twice tried to return to his store but was met by an angry mob. He has also received death threats.

14 die in Kashmir on eve of summit

SRINAGAR (R) — At least 14 people were killed in clashes in the troubled Kashmir Valley on Friday, the eve of a two-day summit between leaders of arch-rivals India and Pakistan. Indian defence and police officials said four soldiers, four policemen and two militants were killed in a clash near Suddipora village, 40 kilometres north of Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir state. "The exchange of fire continues, further details are awaited," a defence official told Reuters, adding that five houses caught fire in the exchange of fire and were gutted.

UNITA leader to be tried for war crimes

LUANDA (AFP) — Angola's highest court on Friday decided to try National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) leader Jonas Savimbi for war crimes. Attorney General Domingos Kulolo told reporters that Savimbi, branded a "war criminal" by the Angolan parliament in January, must answer several charges. The civil war in Angola resumed last November after Savimbi's forces failed to comply with a 1994 peace agreement calling for the disarmament of his UNITA and the handing over of dozens of cities and towns to the central administration.

Delegation leaves for S. Arabia today to discuss economic ties

By Ghadeer Taber

AMMAN — A top-level team leaves for Saudi Arabia today to discuss expanding trade and consolidating economic relations with Riyadh following pledges of support by the Saudi government. Following the death of King Hussein, many countries have reached out to Jordan with promises of financial aid to help steer the Kingdom through upcoming challenges.

Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states have said they were ready to help the Kingdom after the longest reigning monarch in the Middle East lost a battle with lymphatic cancer Feb. 7 at the age of 63.

"The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was and will continue to stand by Jordan with all its potential and capabilities... The Kingdom will stand by you strongly and steadily in good and bad times," Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah, who attended the King's funeral, was quoted as saying.

Economic troubles have in the past been the spark for unrest in Jordan's poorest areas, and an acute recession coupled with a heavy debt burden will continue to be the biggest challenge for His Majesty King Abdullah and the government.

King Abdullah, who assumed the reigns of power on Feb. 7, has to grapple with a recession-hit economy, disenchantment with peace with Israel, and the continuous quagmire in Iraq, as well as domestic calls for political reforms.

"We are going to Saudi Arabia to discuss means to develop an institutional framework for a long-term relationship," said Finance

Minister Michel Marto. The delegation, which will hold two days of talks, will also include Minister of State for Development Affairs Taber Kanaan, Planning Minister Nabil Ammari and Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh's Economic Advisor Bassem Awadallah.

"We will discuss means to reactivate institutional funds, expand bilateral trade, and encourage Saudi investments in Jordan," Marto told the Jordan Times. "We will discuss possible joint projects."

Jordan is keen to see a resumption of its agricultural exports to the largest economy in the Gulf and further opening up of the Saudi labour market to its workers, who are a main source of remittances.

"We are not looking for a single shot-in-the-arm cash payment... those days are long gone and we cannot return to the pre-Gulf crisis era," said another official. "Today the situation is different for Jordan and Saudi Arabia, which is dealing with its own economic problems with the drop in oil prices," said the official.

Jordan's access to the Saudi Development Fund, which dispersed millions of dollars in soft loans to the country in the 1980s, has been frozen since the 1990 Gulf crisis, when Amman was perceived to support Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

Government officials did not reveal the amount of Jordan's debt to Saudi Arabia.

However, economist Fahed Faneel said the Kingdom owed the Saudi government \$45 million. Riyadh had given assistance to the Kingdom mostly in the form of grants before the crisis. Jordan also owes the Saudi

Development Bank, the government's lending arm, \$125 million.

It is not clear how much Jordan owes Saudi Arabia for its share of maintenance costs for the Saudi oil pipeline. Amman had paid \$1 million monthly when the pipeline was operational. Saudi Arabia suspended oil supplies to Jordan in 1990.

Eight years on, Jordan and the Gulf states have reconciled politically, but their economic relationship has not developed at a commensurate level.

Trade in the first eight months of 1998 stood at JD136.533 million, according to figures released by the Central Bank of Jordan.

But officials are optimistic that Saudi Arabia and Jordan's other friends in the region and abroad, anxious to see a smooth transition to King Abdullah's rule, will help the country politically and economically.

"Jordan has a key role to play in the region, given its moderating and balanced position," said an observer. "Apart from the international respect enjoyed by the late King, the show of support expressed to Jordan's new monarch reflects the importance of the world community places on Jordan's stability."

Saudi sources have said that after putting his house in order, King Abdullah will make Saudi Arabia his first stop on a tour of the Arab World to show his appreciation for the overwhelming backing.

Jordan's other friends lined up to offer economic assistance for the country, seen as a linchpin in the Middle East peace process.

The United States has pledged \$300 million in aid to

the Kingdom, which has been promised as part of the Wye River accords. This is in addition to \$225 million allocated to Jordan as part of the annual foreign aid for both economic and military purposes.

U.S. President Bill Clinton said his country would also support a substantial rescheduling of Jordan's debt to the Paris Club of creditor nations. The Kingdom's debt stands at \$6.8 billion or 91 per cent of gross domestic product.

On Thursday Jordan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) agreed on the main features of a new three-year reform programme, which will be underpinned by a new three-year extended fund facility. Without a clean bill of health from the IMF, Jordan would not be able to reschedule its debts or seek hoped for write-offs and additional loans from creditor nations.

Banking sources have said the United Arab Emirates will make a \$150 million deposit in the Central Bank of Jordan to help shore up the bank's reserves. The Arab Monetary Fund may also make a similar deposit of \$100 million. Saudi Arabia has a major say in the fund's dispersal decisions.

Taming expectations of a flood of incoming funds, Prime Minister Tarawneh, addressing lawmakers Wednesday, said recent pledges by Arab countries and other allies have not translated into tangible figures. Some lawmakers and economists have cautioned against planning too much hope on the promised aid actually coming through, and have urged further restructuring of the economy and pushing ahead with opening markets for Jordanian exports.



Lebanese villagers cry and wave as they stand Friday behind Israeli mines and barbed wire at the entrance to their village of Armon in south Lebanon (Reuters photo)

Lebanese protest against Israeli takeover of southern village

KAFR TIBNEET (R) — Lebanese government representatives joined residents of Amoun on Friday in a protest against Israel's sealing off of their village a day earlier.

Israel and its proxy militia, the South Lebanon Army (SLA), effectively annexed Amoun to their occupation zone in south Lebanon on Thursday by installing lines of barbed wire and land mines to prevent access from the rest of Lebanon.

Minister of Public Works and Transport Najib Mikati lead a

group to the edge of Amoun, site of frequent guerrilla attacks on Israeli forces, and talked to the few old people waiting beyond the barbed wire.

"I came here on behalf of the Lebanese president and government. We are doing our best to free Amoun from the Israeli prison," Mikati said.

Old women and children behind the wires wept, demanding the restoration of access to their village. One woman said members of the International Committee of the Red Cross had entered earlier on Friday to

bring bread and medicine.

State officials and representatives of political parties joined the protest in the village of Kafir Tibneet, which overlooks Amoun on the edge of Israel's 15-kilometre deep occupation zone.

The action by Israeli and SLA troops had forced residents of the largely depopulated village to enter and exit through a checkpoint at Kafir Tibneet, one of the handful of places where one is allowed to move between the occupied area and the rest of Lebanon.

Kurds burn Turkish flag, continue protests in Mideast, Europe

Agencies

THOUSANDS OF Kurds demonstrated across the Middle East Friday in support of rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan, burning the Turkish flag in the Lebanese capital, attacking Turkish trucks in Iran, and causing traffic chaos in Cyprus.

An estimated 3,000 to 5,000 protesters marched on the Lebanese parliament and prime ministry in Beirut, demanding that the government intercede with Turkey to set Ocalan free.

Ocalan, who was seized by Turkish security agents in Kenya on Monday, is well-known in Lebanon, where his group had training camps in the 1980s. He was last seen in Lebanon in 1992 at a guerrilla training camp in the Syrian-controlled Bekaa Valley.

Two former Lebanese cabinet ministers joined the protest. The protesters burned a Turkish flag in front of the parliament building as they shouted "Apo, Apo" — Ocalan's nickname — and carried portraits of the guerrilla leader that read: "Apo, Mandela of the Kurds" and "Freedom for Ocalan."

In Nicosia, Cyprus, about 300

demonstrators waving Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) flags and chanting "free ocalan!" marched through the city centre, bringing traffic to a standstill for an hour.

Earlier, some 100 Kurds ended a hunger strike outside the Greek embassy. Before dispersing, they delivered a letter to the embassy in the name of the PKK's political wing, the National Liberation Front of Kurdistan.

The letter demanded Ocalan's release and the resignation of Greek Prime Minister Costas Karamanlis.

In Tehran, more than 2,000 Kurds stood outside the Turkish embassy, shouting "Turkey, we will burn you!"

The protesters then marched through the Iranian capital, carrying pictures of Ocalan and chanting "Long Live Apo."

Elsewhere in Iran, some 3,000 Kurds staged a demonstration in Mahabad, a city close to the borders of Iraq and Turkey that was proclaimed the capital of Kurdistan early this century.

In Bern, Kurdish activists protesting at Turkey's capture of Ocalan ended their occupation of a Swiss political party's headquarters and freed two hostages

unharmed on Friday, Swiss media reported.

The SDA news agency said demonstrators, numbering 20 to 30, left around 18:05 local time, some three hours after they had entered the Radical Democrats offices and seized two staff members.

Police allowed the activists and dozens of supporters who had gathered outside to leave the scene.

In Geneva, a group of Kurds occupied the headquarters of the World Council of Churches as part of continuing protests against the arrest of Ocalan.

Konrad Raiser, general secretary of the church council — which groups more than 300 churches in 100 countries — was holding talks with the demonstrators, a statement said.

Meanwhile, the head of the U.N. European headquarters in Geneva, Vladimir Petrovsky, had discussions with other senior U.N. representatives on how to tighten security to prevent future occupations by protesters.

(Continued on page 12)



Kurdish protesters Friday carry a picture of Abdullah Ocalan during a demonstration in front of the Israeli consulate in Montreal. One policeman was injured and 14 people arrested during the demonstration (AP photo)

Turk president hopes law will disarm PKK guerrillas Ecevit tells story of Ocalan's capture, 'confirms' outside help

ANKARA (Agencies) — Turkish President Suleyman Demirel has called for a "repentance law" to encourage followers of captured Kurdish guerrilla chief Abdullah Ocalan to come down from the mountains and surrender before the spring.

Demirel's comments were the first conciliatory words from a senior figure since Ocalan was captured in Kenya and spirited back to face treason charges. But fractious parties seemed

reluctant to back a recall of parliament before April elections.

"I know that this law might not be viewed positively in some places where there is suffering, but it is important in the name of preventing more bloodshed," Demirel told Milliyet newspaper.

"This must be completed with cool-headedness and tolerance."

"There are still 2,000 people in the mountains [of southeastern Turkey] and 3,000 in Iraq. Spring is coming. These

people must be prevented going down this dead-end street."

But after Demirel's appeal a 15-year-old boy was killed in a clash between police and demonstrators supporting Ocalan's separatist Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) in the southeastern city of Kiziltepe, local officials said.

Witnesses said the boy was caught in an exchange of fire between police and protesters.

It was the first bloodshed in Turkey

since Ocalan's dramatic arrest. Scattered protests have occurred in the southeast and in big city suburbs where Kurds have migrated to escape the fighting and widespread poverty.

The president said a law should be passed quickly, before the April 18 elections and before the spring period, when the PKK would normally resume operations in southeastern Turkey.

(Continued on page 12)

Paper to resume publication after ruling overturned

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN — The opposition weekly Al Majd will reappear on the newsstands Monday after the Court of Appeals overturned a recent lower court decision to suspend publication while its editor stands trial on charges of publishing false and offensive stories.

In an unprecedented decision, the Court of Appeals ruled on Thursday that the application of Article 50 of the 1998 Press and Publications Law, which allows for closure of a newspaper during the ongoing trial of any of its employees charged with violating the press law, was inappropriate in this case.

"The Amman Court of Appeals, headed by Judge Mohammad Saad Nasser, took a historic decision on Thursday by overruling last Sunday's decision by the Court of First Instance to stop the publication of Al Majd," said Khalil Khurma, the weekly's managing editor.

"Hence, the paper will appear on Monday," its regular day of publication, he said in a statement made available to the Jordan Times on Friday.

Al Majd editor Fahed Rimawi is charged with "slandering the Royal family, publishing false information about the prime minister and members of the government and attacks on the security service."

He was detained on Feb. 4

and released on bail two days later.

The Jordan Press Foundation criticised Sunday's court decision to ban the publication of the weekly until the end of the trial and urged the government to introduce changes to the much-opposed law to stop such practices.

Rimawi is the first journalist to stand trial under the 1998 Press and Publications Law — at the heart of international, regional and local criticism by press freedoms and human rights groups.

Khurma said the appellate court revoked the earlier decision after Hussein Mjalli, Rimawi's defence attorney and head of the Jordan Bar Association, decided to appeal the decision.

He hailed "the justice and integrity of the Jordanian judicial system which proved once again it will remain a supporter of freedom, rights and democracy."

No date has been set yet for Rimawi's trial. But Khurma said he expected Rimawi to appear before the court in the "next few weeks" in proceedings related to this case and another separate case.

Meanwhile, Al Majd's brief ban appears to have created unease between the JPA and the Press and Publications Department (PPD), which says it decided to take the case to court after the association failed to look into it.

(Continued on page 12)

UNSCOM chief fears Iraq will face down U.N.

MELBOURNE (R) — The United Nations chief Iraq weapons inspector Richard Butler said on Friday he feared Baghdad would succeed in stopping U.N. efforts to scrap its weapons of mass destruction and block its arms programmes.

Butler, in Australia for an international disarmament conference, told reporters he had expressed his "grave concern that I do hold about the prospect that this one recalcitrant state might succeed in facing down the law passed by the Security Council" in a meeting with Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer.

Butler said he also told Downer of his fears over the deadlock between Iraq and the United Nations and "the prospect that we won't be able to resume the business of controlling Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programme."

Last December the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM), charged with ridding Iraq of its nuclear, chemical and biological weapons capabilities, pulled out over Iraq's lack of cooperation. Iraq's stance triggered U.S. and British air strikes.

In a bid to end the stand-off with Iraq, the U.N. Security Council set up three new panels, including

one which will start meeting next week to recommend ways of resuming weapons monitoring in Iraq.

Butler said if Iraq agreed to cooperate with the panel's plan, due in late March, weapons inspections could resume some time in April at the earliest.

He declined to speculate on whether the new monitoring plan would be less stringent than the rules that Iraq defied.

But he said his UNSCOM team made clear to the Security Council last month that even if the U.N. stopped pursuing Iraq's past weapons programme and focused only on Baghdad's current activities, inspections would have to be just as tight.

"If that's the council's decision, we can do it. But we warned that under that set of circumstances, the monitoring system would have to be very heavy-weight, very intrusive and continue to have elements that are not different from what we were doing under the disarmament system — which is no-notice inspections at places of our choice at our time and so on."

The International Atomic Energy Agency issued a similar warning in a report last week on the need for

U.S. officer says Saddam no threat to forces in Turkey

SUMTER (AP) — The man in charge of U.S. air operations around Iraq says Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein is a desperate man who is no threat to American forces in Turkey.

"I don't think he has the ability to attack Turkey," said Lt. Gen. Hal Hornburg, commander of the 9th Air Force based at Shaw Air Force Base in Sumter. "He does have the ability to attack Kuwait and Saudi Arabia."

Saddam has threatened to attack Turkey because of the American and British warplanes based there. The planes enforce a no-fly zone over northern Iraq that has been in place since the end of the Gulf War in 1992.

Hornburg also talked about operation Desert Fox, December's mission to destroy Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, reduce Iraq's ability to threaten its neighbours and defend Kuwait.

"The operation, though it only lasted four days, was painstakingly planned and executed," he said. "As always, we stand ready to defend Kuwait."

Hornburg said claims that the bombing of an oil facility during the mission hurt Iraqi civilians was unfounded. He claimed that money generated by the facility went straight into Saddam's pockets.

Hornburg made his remarks to about 100 people at the Sumter Chamber of Commerce breakfast.

intrusive inspections to make sure Iraq did not build a nuclear bomb.

Butler was pessimistic on whether Iraq would comply soon with the prerequisites for lifting sanctions, which have been in place since Baghdad invaded Kuwait in August 1990. "They are making very belittling noises at the moment," he said. The outspoken Australian,

who last December offended Russian diplomats and firmly denied allegations that UNSCOM spied on Iraq for the United States, confirmed he would not seek to renew his UNSCOM contract when it ends in June.

He said he would willingly quit earlier if the revised monitoring plan set up a new inspection team.



Two Lebanese women carrying their children stand behind barbed wire in the southern Lebanese village of Armon on Thursday. The inhabitants there woke up to find their homes incorporated into the zone occupied by Israel and its South Lebanon Army (SLA) allied militia. The SLA issued a statement saying the wire had been put up 'to protect the inhabitants from Hizbollah forces who use their village to launch terrorist acts against the Israeli army and the SLA' (AFP photo)

PNA denies report on Arafat's health

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Palestinian officials on Friday denied a report in a London-based journal that Palestinian President Yasser Arafat has developed arterial sclerosis and is suffering from memory lapses.

Citing sources close to Arafat, the foreign report said in Thursday's editions that "the man with the legendary memory cannot remember what happened yesterday."

Arafat aide Ahmad Tibi, a physician, called the report "nonsense." "These are the same lies concerning the health of the chairman published every five or six months," Tibi said, adding that Arafat's health was excellent and that his aides have trouble keeping up with the Palestinian leader's 16-hour work days. Tibi said the 68-year-old Arafat, who was in Rome on Friday for a meeting with Pope John Paul II, sees a doctor periodically, but would not say how often. Arterial sclerosis is a hardening of the blood vessels that can restrict blood supply to the brain and cause memory loss.

North Iraq a thorn in the side of Turkey-Iraq ties

BAGHDAD (R) — Turkey hit Iraq with a double blow this week, spurring Baghdad's appeal to stop Western warplanes from using a Turkish base and then sending its troops deep inside northern Iraq territory to pursue rebels.

Analysts said the volatile northern territory was a festering sore in relations between Turkey and Iraq.

They added, however, that Iraq was unlikely to let ties unravel at a time when it is struggling under U.N. sanctions and its southern neighbours Kuwait and Saudi Arabia show no signs of preventing Western planes from attacking Iraq in the south.

"Iraq needs friends. It has everything to lose and nothing to gain by letting its ties with Turkey get worse," one diplomat said.

"Its ties with Turkey are like an old marriage. Things will not break down easily."

U.S. warplanes fired missiles on Friday at Iraqi radar sites in the northern no-fly zone, set up after the 1991 Gulf War to protect Kurds.

It was the third time this week that the planes were reported raiding the north in

patrols launched from Turkey's Incirlik base.

Baghdad reported attacks in the north on Monday and Thursday. In a separate statement it then slammed Turkey for sending troops into northern Iraq to pursue rebels loyal to jailed Kurd leader Abdulrahman Qasbi.

Iraq noted the Turkish incursion, which started this week, coincided with the activities of the United States and Britain.

"[The Iraqi government] demands the Turkish government pull out its invading forces from inside Iraqi territories immediately and to stop repeating such practices," the Iraqi foreign ministry statement said.

"What arouses astonishment is that the new Turkish invasion comes at a time when Ankara carried out high-ranking political talks with the aim of promoting and developing relations," Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz ended a visit to Turkey this week empty-handed after Ankara rejected his appeal to stop Western warplanes using Incirlik to patrol the area.

He said in Ankara that Iraq

was not threatening its neighbours but that Iraq itself was endangered by the U.S. and British patrols.

Western attacks on Iraqi targets in the northern and southern no-fly zones have become a regular occurrence since Iraq said last month it did not recognise the exclusion areas.

This week, Iraqi Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan was asked by Radio Monte Carlo if Iraq was prepared to attack the Turkish base as it had said it might do to the Gulf bases.

He said that if "Incirlik keeps being used to attack Iraq, the threats of an Iraqi response may also affect it."

Since the 1991 Gulf War, Baghdad has lost control over northern Iraq, where Turkey keeps a semi-permanent presence in the rugged mountains. Iraq has criticised previous incursions into the areas by Turkey, which says it has the right to pursue Kurdish rebels.

Other irritants include Turkey's military exercises with Israel and Ankara's request last month for Washington to send Patriot missiles to Turkey in case of an escalation with Baghdad.

One analyst said the latest Turkish incursion along with the Western patrols in the north after Aziz's visit had complicated the picture.

"There are so many factors, Iraq was looking for cracks to fight the no-fly zones and it didn't find any in Turkey," he said.

"But I believe Iraq and Turkey have a lot of common interests. First is the threat of an independent Kurdish state and then there are economic considerations," the analyst said.

Turkey's economy in the south was reliant on trade with Iraq before the Gulf War and it has felt the pinch of the U.N. trade sanctions. Turkey also received revenue from Iraqi oil transiting by pipeline as well as good terms for oil.

"Turkey wants Iraq to stop defying the no-fly zones and get the sanctions lifted," said the diplomat.

But Turkey also has NATO agreements and bilateral military accords, including one with Iraq's enemy, the United States.

"Turkey and Iraq need each other, but it is now like a chess match being played with a lot of parallel characters," the analyst said.

Local students produce 1st Mideast French magazine

By Susan Resheq

AMMAN — Students from several governmental and non-governmental schools have produced the first French magazine in Jordan and the first to be published in the Arab World.

"I regard producing such a magazine as the crowning of the creative ability of all students who participated in bringing it out," said Izat Jaradat, Ministry of Education secretary general.

The magazine, "Fax", was produced under the supervision of the French Cultural Centre and a media compa-

ny in France called "Clem." Clem is involved in the production of the "Fax" magazine in many countries, and Jordan is the first Arab country it has dealt with.

The representative said "there is cooperation between the Jordanian and the French ministries of education, and between the French Cultural Centre and governmental and non-governmental schools."

"This activity is aimed at students between 14 and 20 years of age; we try to create

a cultural bridge between countries and to produce good reporters for the future," she told the Jordan Times. Dana Qussous, one of the students active in producing Fax said: "It is a monthly magazine, and the activity is regarded as a world youth gathering. Each month a different country publishes the magazine."

Amman Aloush, another student, said: "Fax deals with many subjects. Our issue focused on 'From Education To Humanitarianism.' We received faxes from many countries that we edited, translated and summarised in French."

Rand Halasah, a student from one of the schools that participated, said: "Many students took part with their own reports in French; they talked about a multitude of matters." The Clem representative said: "We regard cooperation with Jordan as a great step and we try to cooperate in the future in various activities."

The French Cultural Centre published 160 copies of the magazine which was dedicated to His Majesty King Hussein.

Palestinians say talks with U.S. signal stronger ties

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — The United States and the Palestinians set up five bilateral committees in recent Washington talks, a top Palestinian official said Thursday, a signal for the Palestinians of a new era in U.S.-Palestinian relations.

Saeb Erekat, the top Palestinian negotiator, said the committees would cover trade and investment; information exchange; U.S. aid;

legal issues, especially U.S. Congress decisions targeting the Palestinian National Authority; and a business council with 15 businessmen from each community.

The committees would be overseen by senior Palestinian negotiator Nabil Shaath and a yet-to-be-named State Department official.

"This was a very important development in U.S.-Palestinian relations,"

Erekat said of the talks led by U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Mahmoud Abbas, deputy to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.

"For the first time, we are talking with the Americans about bilateral issues without having Israelis there," he said.

Israel once insisted on full involvement in Palestinian development, seeing greater

Palestinian autonomy as a threat to Israel's negotiating position, but the Israeli role has diminished as Palestinian-U.S. relations have flourished in recent months.

U.S. President Bill Clinton visited the Gaza Strip and Bethlehem in December in what Palestinians saw as tacit acknowledgement of their aspirations to statehood.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Programme TWO

19:10News headlines
19:35Doc - Perspective
20:00 News in Arabic (Channel 2 links up with channel 1)
20:30 Programme on the late His Majesty King Hussein
21:00 Islamic History in Jordan
21:30On the Banks of Jordan
22:00News in English
22:10 Doc - National Geographic
23:00 News in Arabic (Channel 2 links up with channel 1)

PRAYER TIMES

04:52Fajr
06:10Sunrise/Duha
11:49Dhuhr
14:59Asr
17:29Maghreb
18:46Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweidieh, Tel. 5920740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.
4632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624990
Terra Sancta Church Tel.
4622366
Anglican Church Tel.
4624853/4624811
St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox
Church Tel. 4771751
Amman International Church

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Tel. 5865897

German-speaking Evangelical
Congregation Tel. 5688404

The Evangelical Local Church
in Amman Tel. 5811295

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter
Day Saints Tel. 4654932

St. John the Baptist at De la
Salle College Tel. 5661757

Church of the Annunciation
Tel. 4637440

Greek Orthodox Church Tel.
4646138

Church of Presentation, Sweidieh
Tel. 5920146

The United Catholic Church
Tel. 4624757

The English-Language
Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190

Evangelical Free Church Tel.
4892679

The Baptist Church Tel.
4628052

The Armenian Catholic
Church Tel. 4771331

The Armenian Orthodox
Church Tel. 4775261

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department
of Meteorology

Cold weather conditions will
prevail with temperatures dipping
further. Occasional scattered
showers are expected and
winds northwesterly moderate.
In Aqaba, it will be rainy, skies

partly cloudy, winds northerly
moderate to active, and seas
choppy.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman04/10

Aqaba09/18

Deserts03/13

Jordan Valley09/17

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 12 Aqaba 21. Humidity
readings: Amman 92 per cent.
Aqaba 55 per cent.

Following are the temperatures
expected today in the following
areas:

Ajloun01/06

Jerash02/11

Um Qays02/12

Madaba02/11

Petra03/12

Dead Sea08/17

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Sa'ad Tawfiq4788285

Dr. Wissam Hrayyin4748563

Dr. Omar Yassin5336221

Dr. Khalid Abdo4657129

AMMAN:
Firas Pharmacy5661912

Al Salam Pharmacy 4636730

Mayadiah Pharmacy537004

Rukn Al Dawa Pharmacy 5536169

IRBID:
Dr. Lutfi Al Shalabi020241789

Fou'ad Pharmacy020275360

ZARQA:
Dr. Salah Saffarini (05)987565

Palestine Pharmacy05983562

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre4637111

Civil Defence Department5661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue
.....4630341

Civil Defence Emergency199

Rescue Police 192, 4621111, 4637777

Fire Brigade4617101

Blood Bank4775121

Highway Police5343402

Traffic Police4896390

Public Security Dept.4630321

Hotel Complaints5605800

Price Complaints5661176

Water & Sewage Complaints4897467

Amman Municipality Complaints
.....7871111

Telephone Information (directory
assistance)121

Overseas Calls0132

Central Amman Telephone
Repairs4623101

Abdali Tel. Repairs5661101

Jordan Television4773111

Radio Jordan4774111

Water Authority5680100

J. Electricity Authority 5815615

Electric Power Co.4663881

RJ Flight Information44-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport44-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special
Surgery5921199

The Islamic, Abdli5666131/7

Hussain Medical Centre5856856

Luznile4630195

Khalidi Maternity4644281/6

Akleh Maternity4642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity4642363

Malhas, J. Amman4636140

Palestine, Shmeisani5607071

Shmeisani Hospital5607431

Jordan Hospital5607550

University Hospital5353444

Al-Muasher Hospital5667279

Al-Ahli, Abdli5664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen4777101/3

Al-Bashir4775111/25

Army, Marka4891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital5157100

Amal Hospital5607155

Al Amal Cancer Centre5353000

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital

Zarqa National Hospital

Ibn Sina Hospital09986731

Al Hikma Modern Hospital

09990990

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital

Roman Catholic Hospital

Ibn Al Nafes Hospital

Rosary Sisters Hospital

Speciality Hospital0217103100

AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital

032014111

07:15Bangkok, Doha (RJ)

Other Flights

13:05Vienna (OS)

13:15Riyadh (SV)

13:20 Abu Dhabi, Doha (GF)

14:05Rome (AZ)

18:00Dubai, Damascus (JE)

18:40Beirut (ME)

19:05Paris (AF)

19:15Frankfurt (LH)

21:35Cairo (MS)

22:55 London, Damascus (BA)

23:35Amsterdam (KL)

01:00Belgrade (JU)

Royal Wings (RW)
08:30 Aqaba (arriving at QAIA)

08:50 Aqaba (arriving at QAIA)

09:35 Aqaba (arriving at Marka
Airport) (RW)

PNA
denies
report
on Arafat's
health



KING, ROYAL FAMILY MEMBERS VISIT KING HUSSEIN'S TOMB: His Majesty King Abdullah accompanied by HRH Princess Rania Al Abdullah, HRH Crown Prince Hamzah Ben Al Hussein, HRH Prince Faisal Ben Al Hussein, and HRH Hashem Ben Al Hussein Thursday pay a visit to the tomb of the late King Hussein and recited verses from the Holy Koran. King Abdullah also received condolences from the widow of former Lebanese President René Muawwad, former Saudi Petroleum Minister Mohammad Zaki Yamani, and Chairman of the Israeli Army Shaul Mofaz (Petra photo)

Queen receives Suharto's daughters, wife of Na'el Muwwad

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor, who went to pray at His Majesty King Hussein's grave, met Thursday several mourners there to lay wreath and pay their respects to the late King.

Among them were Palestinians living in Israel and the West Bank as well as Palestinian refugees.

The Queen thanked them for their prayers, wreaths and support.

Earlier, Queen Noor received at Raghadan Palace Siti Rukmana and Siti Hediati, the daughters of former President Suharto of Indonesia, who presented the Queen with a letter from their father, in which he expressed his grief over the passing of King Hussein. They also presented the Queen with two hand-written and hand-bound Korans for the Queen and the Royal family; the holy books were produced during the first 1,000 days following their mother's death.

Queen Noor said that King Abdullah knows their part of the world very well and will carry on his father's legacy in promoting and developing relations between the two countries.

She added that Princess Rania, who is very involved in development work in Jordan, will be a valuable partner for them to work with in the future.

Queen Noor also met with Mrs. Na'ela Mu'awwad, the wife of the late President of Lebanon René Mu'awwad. In offering her condolences to the Queen Mrs. Mu'awwad said that the late King Hussein was a "great friend and a great Arab leader." Mrs. Mu'awwad was accompanied by her son Michel, the wife of the Lebanese Ambassador and Senator Leila Sharaf.

Princess Rania Abdullah and Princess Basma Bint Talal attended both meetings.

Queen Noor and the members of the Royal family received condolences at Raghadan Palace from mourners who were unable to pay their respects earlier. With the Queen were Their Royal Highnesses Princess Rania Ahdullah, Princess Basma Bint Talal, Princess Tahgreed Mohammad, Princess Sarvath El Hassan, Princess Alla, Princess Aisha, Princess Zein, Princess Mona, Princess Alia Al Faisal, Princess Ghida Talal, Princess Rahma, Princess Sumaya and Ms. Farah Daghestani.



Her Majesty Queen Noor receives condolences from an orthodox priest near the grave of King Hussein, Thursday (AP photo)

Sacked editors to write for Al Ra'i

By Alia Shukri Hamzeh

AMMAN — Two senior editors who were sacked from Al Arab Al Yawm daily earlier this month will join fellow columnists at Al Ra'i newspaper as of today, said Al Ra'i's chief editor on Friday.

"Starting Saturday both former editors will have columns in Al Ra'i paper," said Abdul Wahab Zugheilat.

Saleh Al Kallab, Al Arab Al Yawm's former chief editor and Taher Al Adwan, responsible editor, were handed letters of dismissal dated Feb. 2 by the daily's administration informing them that their services were no longer required.

The letters, however, did not give reasons for the dismissals, but said that their contracts with the daily due to end in March would not be renewed and that they have been given the rest of February as vacation.

Due to replace them was journalist Marwan Hziyayn who, because of a heart attack, was unable to assume the post.

The Press and Publications Law stipulates that a new responsible editor should be appointed no longer than one month after a vacancy.

According to sources, Al Arab Al Yawm's administration has been busy interviewing candidates for the two vacant posts.

"I still do not know why the paper did this, and if I were to give you reasons I would be guessing," Kallab said, refusing to elaborate further.

"The whole issue is behind us now and we are expecting to sign a contract with Al Ra'i soon," he added.

Kallab and Adwan have been working with Al Arab Al Yawm ever since it first came out in May, 1997. Before that they were both columnists at Al Dustour daily.

Sources close to the two journalists said they have already filed law suits against the Al Arab Al Yawm for "arbitrary dismissal" and that a court notice has been delivered to the paper's administration.

"No reaction from the paper has been received as yet," the source, requesting anonymity, said.

Reasons behind the dismissal of both writers remains a puzzle to many, yet speculations have centred around personal differences between the chief editor and Dr. Riyadh Al Hroub, chairman of the Board of Al Arab Al Yawm's.

Agence France Presse (AFP) and the London-based Al Hayat daily both said at the time that Hroub had sacked his editors shortly after they published unofficial reports on changes in the line of succession.

Hroub has remained tight-lipped over the issue and would only comment that the dismissals were merely part of the paper's "internal restructuring process," and that Kallab and Adwan's cases against the paper would not stand, because they lack legal basis.

"Their contracts expired and we did not renew them... they were informed amicably of this, and in accordance with the law," Hroub added.

Kallab said he and his colleague were pleased to write for Al Ra'i, but he did not specify if the arrangement was a permanent one, or if they planned to contribute to other publications.

Zugheilat told the Jordan Times that Adwan's column in Al Ra'i will be on the first page of the second section, while Kallab's column will be on the last page of the paper's first section.

Investigation into shoot-out to submit findings 'soon'

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN — Minister of Interior Nayef Qadi on Friday said that a security committee was formed to investigate the killing of two policemen during a shoot-out with prisoners who were being escorted from the State Security Court to Swaga Prison on Wednesday.

Qadi said the committee, composed of Public Security Department senior officers, is expected to submit its report in few days. He declined to give further details.

"We have asked them to speed up their investigations, and hopefully results will be disclosed soon," the minister said.

Sergeants Mohammad Daifallah and Mahmoud Farahed were killed when two prisoners, Mohammad Jaghameen and Abdullah Suleiman, overpowered them inside the police van that was carrying them back to Swaga prison, 100 kilometres south of Amman.

The two prisoners are being tried for the murders of 12 people in separate crimes in the Sbmeisani and Rabiya neighbourhoods of Amman. An Iraqi diplomat was among those who were killed.

Suleiman was killed during the shoot-out, and Jaghameen sustained injuries following the three-hour stand-off where tens of policemen were called to the scene.

Jaghameen is currently being treated at the King Hussein Medical Centre under tight police security.

Local Arabic dailies said that one possibility the committee is investigating is whether one of the two prisoners succeeded in "getting hold" of a 7 millimetre-calibre gun before the van left the court.

The interior minister refused to confirm or deny these reports and insisted that the investigations will clear up all these doubts.

Autopsies on the two policemen showed that the total of 40 gunshot wounds came from a gun, which is not Police Department standard issue. Al Ra'i Arabic daily reported Friday. The autopsy on Suleiman is expected to be conducted.

The killing of the two policemen, who were hurried in their hometown in Tafleeh Governorate on Friday, was the first such case in more than 30 years.

On Thursday, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hamzah visited two policemen injured in the incident. They were identified as Haitham Jaloudi and Mahmoud Shraydeh.

U.S. Chairman of the joint chiefs of staff to visit Jordan

AMMAN (J.T.) — General Henry H. Shelton, Chairman of the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, will arrive in Jordan on Saturday for a two-day visit. During his stay, Shelton will offer his condolences to His Majesty King Abdullah over the passing of King Hussein on Feb. 7.

The U.S. armed forces head will also meet with his Jordanian counterpart, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Field Marshal Abdul Hafiz Marei Kaabneh, and senior military and government officials. This is the second visit in less than a week of a senior U.S. military official to Jordan. Last week General Anthony Zinni, head of U.S. Central Command visited Jordan to pay condolences to King Abdullah and to meet with Kaabneh and other officials. The U.S. has pledged additional economic and military aid to Jordan since the death of King Hussein.

Associations continue boycott of U.S.-British products

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN — Doctors, pharmacists and dentists professional associations have said they intend to continue their nationwide campaign to boycott U.S. and British-made goods in protest against the air strikes launched by the two countries on Iraq last December.

The associations' overall decision to mobilise popular pro-Iraqi sentiments that have prevailed since the 1990-91 Gulf war, came after a meeting of the three associations, the Jordan Pharmacists Association, the Jordan Medical Association and the Jordan Dentists Association, late on Wednesday. The meeting looked into ways to maintain the two-month campaign, and attendees reiterated their appeal for the associations' members to blacklist all British and American-made medicines.

Bassim Dajani, head of the 14-member Executive Council of the Union of Professional Associations, long a hot-bed of political activism and strong pro-Iraqi and anti-Israeli stands, urged the associations' members to uphold the joint decision because "the United States and Britain must be using a part of the money gained from selling drugs to launch their attacks against Iraq."

"This is the least we can do to express the popular feeling, [and to] reject the strikes and the crippling sanctions imposed on Iraq," said Dajani.

However, the Executive Council, which represents the country's professionals — doctors, lawyers, geologists, nurses, journalists, engineers, pharmacists, artists, writers, etc. — also urged the Kingdom's 4.2 million population not to attend any activities or functions organised by the British and American embassies in Amman.

"We will continue our boycott as long as the crisis between Iraq, the U.S. and Britain continues," JMA President Bassim Dajani told the Jordan Times.

But if no alternative medicine is available for a British or American-manufactured drug, the boycott, an unprecedented action by the professional unions, will not apply to that drug.

Unionists said the boycott could affect sales of the controversial impotency drug Viagra, produced by the American company, Pfizer, when it arrives on Jordanian pharmacy shelves. The Health Ministry approved the drug's registration late last year.

British and U.S. drugs represent 15 to 20 of Jordan's \$110 million annual medicine imports, according to independent estimates.

JPA President Abdul Rahim Issa, whose members own 1,600 pharmacies and 12 drug factories, dismissed fears that the boycott decision would have a negative impact on the needs of Jordanian patients.

"Local and foreign alternatives to the American and British drugs are available, and some U.S. and British medicines would be exempt from the boycott if no local alternative is available," he said.

Ahmad Qadiri, head of the Doctors Association urged the trade sector to demonstrate solidarity with their "Iraqi brothers" and "maintain the boycott and not fall for a handful of money."

Jordanians from all walks of life have staged peaceful demonstrations to protest the latest air strikes against Iraq, launched early Thursday.

Jordan, France extend three-year irrigation accord

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan and France have agreed to extend a three-year accord for improving the efficiency of water irrigation in the Jordan Valley by an additional year, the Ministry of Water and Irrigation announced Friday.

According to Jordan Valley Authority Secretary General Duraid Mahasneh, who cosigned the agreement with French Ambassador in Amman Bernard Emié, the purpose of the bilateral accord is to encourage the application of modern technology in the management of water distribution in irrigation and other areas, particularly in view of the sparse rainfall this winter.

Emié, stressing that France is determined to help Jordan cope with its future challenges under the leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah, said the Jordan Valley water programme reflects his country's desire to assist in making available sufficient water for irrigation in cooperation with the JVA.

The project, which is based on water distribution only upon demand by the users, entails ensuring coordination between the JVA and individual farmers, a system reported to have proven successful in western France over the last 30 years, the ambassador said.

Already, he said, several Jordanian engineers and technicians have been trained in applying this system, during 1999 training more engineers will be trained, and in 2000 work will be conducted in the Jordan Valley by a French team to help the JVA draft an integrated plan for the region. When the draft is completed it is to be submitted to the Ministry of Planning to secure funding.

Two-day weekend meets with mixed reactions from bank staff

By Suha Ma'ayeh

AMMAN — A recent decision by the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) to introduce a two-day weekly holiday has sparked mixed reactions, with employees fearing having to change their daily routine and managers saying it would boost business links with the world.

The decision, taken earlier this month, asked the country's 22 commercial banks to close on Friday and Saturday as of March 1, instead of Friday alone and to increase daily working hours to make up for lost time.

Most of the country's 15,000 bank employees said they were angered by the move on the grounds that they found it difficult to change their day-to-day lifestyles.

Under the new rules, they will have to operate from Sunday to Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with a 30-minute lunch break — to bring the total number of working hours to a maximum of 42.5 hours instead of a minimum of 36 hours.

Banks will open to the public from 9:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. during work days, according to an announcement made by CBJ Governor Ziyad Fariz on Feb. 4.

A 30-year-old credit officer who requested anonymity, said the new system would force him to drop afternoon classes he is attending at a private banking institution to obtain a certified financial manager postgraduate degree.

"Even though I can amend the course, I will not find much time to study," he lamented.

For working women, the adjustment seems even worse.

"Having the doors closed at 4:30 means we will stay on until 6:00 p.m. to finish our work," said Amneh Hassan, 25, a customer services clerk since 1996.

"These working hours will be too long and too tiring," Others, like Ne'meh Khayat, 33, who works at a public relations department at one of the Arab Bank's 33 branches, said having to work for longer hours will keep her away from her two young children for a long time.

"I have no help at home. When my children get back from school they have to be on their own," said Khayat between telephone calls.

Facing monthly payments on a JD24,000 housing loan at an interest rate of four per cent, Khayat said she had no intention of quitting after the new rules take effect.

Bankers said the new arrangements, similar to those applied in most developed countries, will boost economic and business activity in Jordan by extending services for longer hours.

"Prolonging working hours at financial institutions in Jordan for another three hours will narrow the time gap between the Jordanian financial sector and major financial markets," stressed CBJ Deputy Governor Ahmed Abdel-Fattah.

He said the move will reflect positively on communications and correspondence with banks abroad because of extra working hours that will accommodate some of the time differences around the world.

This, Abdel-Fattah added, will enable banks to closely monitor developments in world financial markets and to expand their network of business there.

Abdel-Fattah said apart from Friday, the Muslim world's national weekly holiday, the CBJ opted for adding Saturday because it is a holiday in other world markets.

"Had we chosen any other day then we would have been cut off from these markets for four days," he said, referring to the West's Saturday/Sunday weekend.

Haidar Rashid, President of Jordan's Trade Union of Insurance and Auditors Employees, said he was lobbying the CBJ to alter working hours so that bankers start work at 8:00 a.m. and finish at 3:30 p.m.

"We welcome the idea of having a two-day holiday," he told the Jordan Times. "But we are against extending working hours until 5:00 p.m. as this might have serious repercussions on the majority of banking employees and their families," he explained.

"If the CBJ insists on extending working hours, it might cut down the workforce, especially women who have children," Rashid said.

Article 56 of the 1996 Labour Law sets a maximum of eight working hours a day and says they should not exceed 48 hours a week spread over six days at most. Other bank employees said working for six hours a day six days a week had become an acquired right, therefore, they should be compensated for having to work extra hours.

Majed, 55, an Arab Bank employee for nearly two decades, said only owners

'If the CBJ insists on extending working hours, it might cut down the workforce, especially women who have children'

of banks will benefit from the new changes.

"The shift allowances, which employees earn twice a year for having to work overtime, will be called off," he said.

"Besides, we will not be compensated for extra hours that we will be working," he added.

However, some banks such as the Housing Bank will not be affected by the new ruling as they have been working from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. six days a week for over two years.

Mohammad Abu Zeid, Housing Bank assistant general manager for marketing, said the bank's more than 2,000 employees manning 106 branches across Jordan were accustomed to working for longer hours.

"We were able to cater for more private sector clients, especially since some people can't make it to the bank in the morning because they work," he said.

"To us, the new rules mean we will have to work an extra hour five days a week," he added.

"Having a two-day break will give bankers a chance to expand their social activities and to spend more time with their children," he added.

Mifleh Akel, managing director of the Association of Banks, said that new rules were needed to match Jordan's moves towards economic globalisation.

"How are we going to deal with the rest of the world while our banks are closed," he asked.

"Even though some social burdens might arise from the decision, especially on young couples with children and school time, the decision is not intended to cut down the workforce," he said.

However, Akel suggested that Jordan must have a unified holiday. The government is currently studying plans to have a two-day weekend, opting for Thursday in addition to Friday.

"If the government takes a decision to have two days off, then they will be better off not to do it on Thursday and Friday," he said.

Others like Diab Bayyari, 48, Arab Bank deputy manager at the administration division remained skeptical about the decision.

"The decision is beyond our control. We have to try it out before we pass judgment," he said.

U.S. envoy in last-ditch Belgrade talks

RAMBOUILLET, France (R) — Chief U.S. mediator Christopher Hill arrived in Belgrade Friday in a last-ditch bid to get Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic to accept a Kosovo peace deal before Saturday's deadline, a U.S. diplomat said.

It was the second trip to the Yugoslav capital in a week for Hill, one of the mediators at the 13-day-old peace talks between Serbia and ethnic Albanians at the Chateau de Rambouillet, southwest of Paris.

"He (Hill) has gone at the request of the Secretary (U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright) to reiterate, so that there is no ambiguity, the decision and the seriousness of the decision that needs to be made in order for there to be an agreement by noon tomorrow," the diplomat said.

Thursday, already, Albright had bluntly warned Milosevic that he would face NATO air strikes unless a peace deal was sealed by Saturday midday (1100 GMT).

She said she had told Milosevic that "if air strikes occur, he will be hit hard and he will be deprived of the things he values".

About 430 NATO strike and support planes — including 260 U.S. jets — are on alert. A Pentagon official suggested an initial strike of 50 Tomahawk cruise missiles could send a sharp message to Milosevic without risking alliance warplanes.

Meanwhile, in the countdown to possible air strikes, Western diplomats, aid

workers and their families began an exodus from Yugoslavia Friday.

Several governments advised their citizens to leave Yugoslavia because of the threat of air strikes.

Family and non-essential staff from the British and Canadian embassies left Belgrade by car early Friday — just over 24 hours before the deadline for a peace deal at talks in France.

The United States authorised dependants and non-essential personnel to depart, but did not order them out. A U.S. embassy official said departures might take place over the weekend.

Germany, the United States, Britain and Canada all advised their citizens now in Yugoslavia to leave the country.

The first evacuations from Kosovo itself began Friday as international aid organisations started pulling out workers.

Various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) said they were evacuating international staff, many of whom would leave by car to the Macedonian border, about an hour south of Pristina.

Belgrade newspapers carried the text of an appeal by Serbian President Milan Milutinovic to the contact group overseeing the peace talks to lift the threat of military strikes against his country.

"While the Rambouillet meeting has been proceeding, the FR (Federal Republic) of Yugoslavia has repeatedly been subject to public threats of military



Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic (right) listens to Tassos Papadopoulos, head of a Cypriot parliamentary delegation during talks in Belgrade. President Milosevic said Friday he would not surrender Kosovo even if failure to reach a peace deal results in NATO air strikes. Some Western diplomats and their families began leaving the Yugoslav capital Friday as the clock ticked down to possible NATO air strikes if the Kosovo peace deal was not agreed to by Saturday (Reuters photo)

aggression pronounced by high representatives of certain countries and organisations.

"As these requests and threats have not been discussed nor approved by the contact group, I am writing to you to seek protection from any such unacceptable and unfounded requests and threats," Milutinovic said in the letter dated Feb. 18 and addressed to all six Contact Group member states.

In Brussels, meanwhile, NATO sources said the Yugoslav military's air defence system would be the first target of U.S. cruise missiles fired in a limited NATO strike should Belgrade be blamed for scuppering a deal at Rambouillet.

If heavy damage to the expensive, hard-to-replace

network of radars, communications, surface-to-air missiles, bases and aircraft failed to sway Milosevic, NATO could escalate to a phased campaign of bombardment.

The fixed field positions of Yugoslav army and special MUP paramilitary police in Kosovo, and their dug-in heavy armour, were likely to be targeted.

International pressure on Milosevic reached a new height Thursday. NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana warned that the alliance would strike fast if there was no deal and Britain, France and Germany all issued new pleas to Yugoslavia to settle.

The White House dismissed a warning by Russian President Boris

Yeltsin that Russia "will not let you (the United States) touch Kosovo".

"We're aware that Russia has opposed the use of force in Kosovo," said David Leavy, a spokesman for the U.S. National Security Council.

"But we've also made clear that should the Serbs refuse to comply and refuse to sign a political settlement, that NATO has to consider military action in its own interests, in the interests of the region and the interests of the United States, and we will do so," he said.

With time running out to clinch a deal, all eyes were on Yugoslav strongman Milosevic to see if he would buckle under the international pressure and sign up to an accord.

The ethnic Albanian delegation warned that its support for an international peace plan could not be taken for granted. It accused mediators of conceding far too much ground to the Serbs over the question of sovereignty for Kosovo where ethnic Albanians make up the majority of the population.

Diplomatic activity around the negotiations was expected to hit top gear Friday, with the West determined to make Milosevic abandon his objection to the deployment of 28,000 international peacekeepers to Kosovo to underpin any deal.

Russia, a member of the Contact Group orchestrating the talks, backs Belgrade's argument that the foreign force would undermine Yugoslavia's national integrity.

NEWS IN BRIEF

S. African government agrees to protect journalists' sources

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP) — Government officials and editors signed an agreement Friday recognising the right of journalists to protect their sources. The deal aims to avoid legal battles such as one which has seen subpoenas issued to 17 journalists who witnessed the brutal killing of gang leader Rasheed Staggie in 1996. Journalists have refused to testify to Staggie's inquest, notes and photographic material to Staggie's inquest, arguing it would impede them from doing their jobs and intimidate sources from talking to them. Some South African laws restricting press freedom have been left over from the apartheid era when the white-run government sought to control the media. The deal is designed to prevent future legal battles like the Staggie case from coming to court until the laws are amended. Should police seek to invoke the laws in the future the pact allows journalists to appeal to national director of prosecutions Bulelani Ngcuka. Ngcuka will then try to negotiate a compromise without going to court. The Staggie case involves Associated Press Television News, the Cape Times, Cape Argus, Die Burger, SABC and other news organisations. Police argue information gathered by the journalists was vital to the proper conduct of the inquest.

Yeltsin awards Russian patriarch with top government honour

Moscow (AP) — President Boris Yeltsin awarded Patriarch Alexey II one of Russia's top honours Friday, on the Russian Orthodox Church leader's 70th birthday. Yeltsin granted the order of St. Andrew to Alexey II for "outstanding contributions in the spiritual and moral revival of Russia, and the preservation of peace and agreement in society," the president wrote in a statement. Alexey, who was expected to meet Yeltsin during the day to celebrate his birthday, has led Russia's Orthodox Church since 1990. He has presided over a resurgence of faith since the fall of Communism, when anti-religious drives often forced religions to operate underground. The patriarch has also led a drive to formally enshrine the Orthodox Church as Russia's main faith. A controversial 1997 religion law recognises Orthodoxy as the nation's leading faith, and promises to respect Islam, Judaism and Buddhism. But other denominations must prove they've been in Russia for at least 15 years before they're allowed full legal status. Critics have accused Alexey of trying to drive the smaller faiths out of Russia with the law, and fostering discrimination and suspicion against them.

15 killed in Kashmir fighting

SRINAGAR, India (AP) — Fifteen people were killed Friday in fighting between Indian security forces and separatists in Kashmir, police said. The clashes came a day before Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif begin a weekend summit that will address their competing claims to the Himalayan territory divided between them. Pakistan denies India's charges that it arms and trains the militants fighting in Indian-held Kashmir. Security forces acting on a tip were searching for militants in Kharpora Shadipora, 30 kilometres north of the Kashmiri summer capital of Srinagar, when firing broke out early Friday. Eight police and army fighters and three militants were killed in day-long battles in Kharpora Shadipora. Reporters were kept out of the area, but from a distance could see the fires of half a dozen houses hit by army shells. In Bussu Kukarnag, 70 kilometres south of Srinagar, three other rebels and another soldier were killed in fighting Friday. The insurgents in predominantly Hindu India's only Muslim-majority state want independence or union with neighbouring Pakistan, which is officially Islamic. More than 17,000 people have been killed since the fighting began in 1989.

Bulgaria introduces visa requirements for 17 'risk' countries

SOFIA, Bulgaria (AP) — Bulgaria has introduced visa requirements for nationals from 17 of 24 states regarded by the European Union as "risk countries," the state news agency BTA reported Friday. The move follows accusations by Western governments that citizens of those countries use Bulgaria as a transit stop for illegal emigration to the European Union. Bulgaria, which is an associated member of the EU aspiring for full membership, is reforming its legislation in compliance with EU standards. "The introduction of visa requirements towards the nationals from the risk countries aims to expedite the alignment of Bulgarian law to European legislation," Foreign Minister Nadezhda Mihailova said. An entry visa will be required for citizens of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Zimbabwe, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates, the agency said. The new decision does not affect Russia, Ukraine, Romania, Macedonia, Yugoslavia, Georgia and Tunisia. Under the same government decision a no-visa requirements regime has been introduced towards nationals of Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Australia, Andorra, the Vatican and Monaco.

Remains of slain American model sent home

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — The body of a slain American Monday was flown back to her family Friday, three weeks after her Greek boyfriend confessed to killing and mutilating the former model. Police said the partially burned and headless body of 31-year-old Julie Scully of Mansfield, New Jersey, was found in a marshland pool outside the northeastern town of Kavala. Scully's Greek boyfriend, George Skiadopoulos, confessed to strangling her and decapitating the body to try and hide the evidence. He told authorities they had been arguing over her inability to adjust to life in Skiadopoulos' hometown. Scully's head is still missing. Skiadopoulos said he threw it into the sea after strangling her and trying to cremate the remains Jan. 8. In December, Scully left her ex-husband, Timothy Nist and their 3-year-old daughter and came to Greece plans to marry Skiadopoulos, a petty officer aboard a cruise ship who she met on a Caribbean voyage in 1997. Nist brought her home. But he left Feb. 4 without her remains because identification formalities were not complete. Skiadopoulos, charged with premeditated murder, is in police custody in Kavala awaiting a trial date.

Avoid Kosovo action, Yeltsin tells Clinton

MOSCOW (R) — The Kremlin said Friday President Boris Yeltsin had sent a letter to U.S. President Bill Clinton earlier this week and Russian news agencies said it told Washington not to use force in Kosovo without U.N. approval.

Yeltsin said Thursday he had spoken with Clinton by telephone and sent a letter to warn the United States and its NATO allies not to use force against Serbia if peace talks in France on the future of the province fail.

But the White House said it was confused because Yeltsin had not written or spoken to Clinton in recent days.

Interfax news agency quoted a senior Kremlin source as saying Yeltsin had sent Wednesday the latest in a series of notes to Clinton setting out Russia's position on Kosovo.

"We confirm the report on Interfax that he sent a letter," a Kremlin spokeswoman said by telephone. "But the press service did not issue a report on this and does not intend to do so." She declined to say what the letter was about.

Interfax and ITAR-TASS news agency quoted from the letter, saying the senior Kremlin source had decided to publicise its contents because of the interest in Yeltsin's Thursday comments.

"One of the most pressing issues of international and regional security and stability is the Kosovo situation," they quoted Yeltsin's letter as saying.

"We remain firmly convinced that the political route to solving the problem, with unconditional respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Yugoslavia, is the only

acceptable one."

"Any attempts to use force against Yugoslavia in circumvention of the U.N. Security Council must be excluded," they quoted the letter as saying.

As a permanent member, Russia has a veto in the Security Council.

NATO has said it will move swiftly, using force, if a deal is not reached in talks between Yugoslav and Kosovo Albanians in France by a Saturday noon deadline.

U.S. embassy spokesman Mike Hurley said he could not confirm a letter had been sent but that one could have been sent direct to the White House without the embassy being immediately aware.

"It's a question for the White House," he said by telephone.

"It's not something I have any information on."

Vatican confirms it contacted Britain over Pinochet case

LONDON (AP) — The Vatican confirmed Friday that it intervened in the extradition row over Gen. Augusto Pinochet, asking the British government to send the former Chilean dictator home.

Spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls said the Vatican made its appeal about a month ago after a request from the Chilean government.

Chile, which opposes a foreign trial for the 83-year-old general, expressed concerns about "national sovereignty, including in the field of justice," Navarro-Valls said.

The Vatican spokesman also made a reference to another of Chile's arguments, that the general's arrest interferes with the process of national reconciliation.

"The Holy See supports national reconciliation

everywhere, including Chile," Navarro-Valls said.

Pinochet was arrested Oct. 16 in London on a Spanish warrant alleging that he ordered killings, torture and hostage-taking during his 17-year rule, which began when he ousted Chile's elected president, Marxist Salvador Allende, in 1973.

An official Chilean report says 3,197 people were killed or disappeared at the hands of his secret police during Pinochet's regime.

Pinochet, who remains under armed guard in a rented mansion southwest of London, is fighting extradition to Spain.

His lawyers contend that, under British law, the general is entitled to immunity for any acts committed while a head of state. A ruling from

Britain's highest court on the immunity issue is pending.

The Vatican's intervention in the case was disclosed Thursday by Baroness Symons, a British Foreign Office minister, in a written answer to a question in the House of Lords.

A Foreign Office spokesman, speaking with customary anonymity, said Britain responded to the Vatican appeal, but would disclose no details.

Human rights groups condemned the Vatican's intervention.

"Pinochet has been indicted many times for crimes against humanity, so how can the Pope defend a person like that?" said Carlos Reyes, president of the London-based anti-Pinochet group Chile Democrático.

British balloonists awaiting jet stream

LONDON (AP) — Two British adventurers were Friday hovering over the Sahara desert waiting for a jet stream to take them toward India and closer to their bid to be the first to circle the world nonstop in a balloon.

Pilot Colin Prescott and Andy Elson were travelling at a speed of 32 kph at an altitude of about 5,450 metres. They passed over southern Morocco and the western Sahara Thursday night, their flight headquarters in London said.

"We have had a surprisingly good flight so far," Elson said by radio Thursday. "We're both relaxed and enjoying the splendid African views."

The team's headquarters in London said the pair might have to wait until Saturday morning to pick up the jet stream, which would increase the balloon's height and speed.

The balloonists have already covered some 965 kilometres in their 200-foot craft since taking off

Wednesday morning from a golf course launch pad near Almeria in southern Spain. The only problem has been a leaking top hatch, which was sealed, said Ian Ashpole at the London headquarters.

If all goes well, a successful touchdown could come in the North Sea or in the Mediterranean in the next two to three weeks. The balloon has been adapted to carry three tonnes of extra fuel which the crew hope could keep them afloat for up to 30 days, giving them time to use the slower low altitude winds.

Elson, 45, and Prescott, 48, say they have planned a route that will allow them to avoid flying over China.

Circumnavigating the globe nonstop in a balloon is one of the last great challenges facing aviators.

The Anheuser-Busch Company is offering a \$1 million prize to the first team that makes it.

South Korean president supports 'incentives' for North Korea

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korean President Kim Dae-jung said Friday that the United States and other Western countries should offer "incentives" to encourage North Korea to make Chinese-style reforms and stop making weapons of mass destruction.

"We must tell North Korea that we'll give them incentives if they cooperate," Kim said during a meeting with a group of South Korean legislators returning from a visit to the U.S.

During their visit to Washington last week, the officials, led by former foreign minister Park Jung-soo, met U.S. Congressmen to discuss, among other things, security on the Korean peninsula.

"If North Korea makes reforms and opens its society with Western incentives, it will become a country like China

and Vietnam," Kim told the parliamentary delegates.

Kim said that North Korea, facing an acute food shortage, has no choice but to change. However, he said the isolated Communist country can change faster when encouraged by economic and other benefits.

"If we spend too much time and drag on this, the situation will be only beneficial to them, because there is no opposition party or public opinion in North Korea," he said.

Since taking office a year ago, Kim has been pushing a "sunshine policy" of greater economic and diplomatic engagement with North Korea.

As a direct product of Kim's policy, a South Korean conglomerate started unprecedented sightseeing tours of a scenic North Korean mountain last November. So far, 26,000

South Koreans have visited the North on the tours.

In what appeared to be a peace gesture early this month, North Korea expressed willingness to start talking with South Korea for the first time in many years.

"North Korea at first suspected our intentions but they have been changing slowly to the extent where they now say they are willing to talk with us," Kim said.

Quoting reports from his national security adviser, Lim Dong-won, Kim said the U.S., Japan and China have expressed full support for his engagement policy with North Korea.

Lim visited the three countries earlier this month to seek support for Kim's proposal that the allies deal with all issues involving North Korea as a package, rather than individually.

Kim's proposal would lump North Korea's missile and nuclear programmes together as a single issue. They are now the subject of separate negotiations.

"Dealing with North Korea each time when its nuclear, missile and other problems arise is only advantageous to them," Kim said. "So, I have proposed to resolve all issues in a package." The president said he believes that there are moderates in North Korea who support a compromise with the West to resolve the country's chronic food shortage and other economic problems.

The South Korean parliamentary delegates told Kim that at least two U.S. Democrat Senators — Robert Torricelli from New Jersey and Dianne Feinstein from California — plan to visit North Korea sometime later this year.

Russian Prime Minister Yeltsin said the discussions were very

Russian, possible

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A US consul the follow

1. Public Relations
- Create a variety of English, including translate documents vice versa
- Participate in the

with the following qualifications:
- Excellent written and spoken English
- University degree, preferably in English
- 4 years experience
- Excellent knowledge of Corel Wordperfect

2. Training Assistant
- Assist the Public Awareness preparation organization
- Assist in developing training materials
- Prepare periodic reports

with the following qualifications:
- Excellent written and spoken English
- University degree, preferably in English
- 4 years experience in training
- Excellent knowledge of Perfect

3. Secretary
- Provide full secretarial services
- Filing, distribution of mail
- Provide receptionist services
- Ability to work independently
- Quattro Pro and Corel

with the following qualifications:
- Excellent written and spoken English
- At least 5 years of experience

4. Driver
- Drive vehicles daily
- Check vehicles weekly
- Initiate and supervise

with the following qualifications:
- Valid Driving License
- Minimum of primary school
- Excellent English verbal

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For better life

THE CUSTOMS Department is on the right course by seeking to reverse a recent decision to apply levies on car safety features. These comprise safety belts, advanced brake systems, catalysers, child harnesses and other devices that improve driving safety. Such additions to vehicles are certainly not luxury items to require punitive taxes but are basics which many countries more concerned about road safety view as essentials before any automobile is licensed.

Here we reiterate the perhaps equally important need to develop a coherent national policy on the use of unleaded fuel. Many countries have phased out leaded gasoline and introduced the unleaded kind on a massive scale because they put a higher premium on human life. The health factor is too obvious to be ignored. Jordan is at least 10 years behind other countries in this regard.

It has been scientifically proven that lead from car fumes enters human bodies, food items, livestock and vegetation and causes untold health problems. Countries that value the environment do not license cars unless they are equipped with catalysers to stop the pollution of the atmosphere with carcinogenic elements that get into the human blood stream either directly or indirectly.

Official statistics show that Jordan has one of the highest rates of traffic accidents in the world, increasing at the rate of 10 per cent annually. We need to work in earnest to reverse the tide of road mayhem on our streets and highways by making cars safer to drive and less dangerous to pedestrians. All safety features were exempted from customs in 1996. But that decision was reversed silently a month ago. His Majesty King Hussein's last public letter was full of references to environmental issues and the urgent need to prevent pollution, in order to protect the ozone. King Hussein died from cancer and wanted us to do whatever we can to combat the disease in all its forms. Why not then stop licensing cars which pollute our atmosphere and spread the disease in our midst? This is the least that we can do to honour the life and achievements of the late King.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Fahed Faneh said public opinion in Jordan is unenthusiastic about the country's privatisation programme, adding that while some parties opposing the plan have legitimate fears, others are being irrational. Although the negative attitude by the public might be responsible for the slow implementation of privatisation, the real obstacle facing the programme is giving too much attention to such resistance to the issue, Faneh said. When the government was decisive in privatising for instance the Jordan Inter-Continental Hotel and the Jordan Cement Factories Company, opponents used to express their discomfort but let the process go on, he noted. But the privatisation of the Jordan Telecommunications Company has been aborted as a result of hesitation, said Faneh, which allowed resistance. The government, economic team and the privatisation unit must make serious efforts to change public opinion or at least neutralise people who do not have a personal stake in resisting the scheme, said Faneh.

Al Ra'i's Khairallah Khairallah commented on the recent arrest of Kurdish Labour Party Leader Abdullah Ocalan. Khairallah said that although Turkey is celebrating now, its joy might not last long because after days or weeks it will become obvious that the arrest will not solve the Kurdish problem, regardless of Ocalan's crimes. The country will soon realise that the underlying cause of the problem has not disappeared, and that the arrest will not provide a fundamental solution to the problem of the Kurds and their cause, which needs a political solution, he added. Of course, Ocalan can be blamed for not cooperating with the former Turkish president, who wanted to solve the problem, and for his "fatal" actions now. No doubt, the arrest is almost a victory for the so-called New World Order, which does not allow any country to harbour people who are wanted by other countries, especially with clear U.S. backing for such measures, said Khairallah, but added that this does not mean that Turkey has solved its internal problems.

Turkey — not Ocalan — on trial

Jordanian Perspective



Dr. Musa Keilani

29,000 people, a figure which, by any account, cannot be pinned on the PKK alone.

The "scorched earth" and "iron-fist" policies of the Turkish military are known to the outside world. At one point, German-supplied equipment and weapons were used in the army's battle against the Kurds, prompting the German government to suspend arms supplies to Turkey.

Turkey's human rights record, particularly the army's treatment of Kurds, has come under severe criticism in Europe, but Ankara has defiantly rejected all censure asserting that it was battling to maintain the unity of the country. Indeed, that is a position that should be respected by the international community because it falls within the realm of sovereignty.

But the brutality with which the Turkish government deals with the Kurds and the accompanying repercussions among Kurdish communities living abroad definitely push the issue beyond the border of Turkey.

One could also wonder why the U.S. imposed the so-called "no-fly" zones to "protect" Iraqi Kurds in the north of Iraq and Shites in the south and is largely silent when it comes to Turkish Kurds. But then of course, that reflects the reality of double standards in the region, and for the moment, it seems it is here to stay.

International eyes are focused on Turkey to see if Ocalan is treated fairly and justly. For all practical purposes, it is Ocalan who is going to be tried in a Turkish court, but it is actually Turkey and its approach to the Kurds that are going to be on trial.

THE TURKISH government has reasons to celebrate the capture of Kurdish dissident leader Abdullah Ocalan. So does Bulent Ecevit, the caretaker prime minister, who stands to reap the benefits of the capture in general elections scheduled to be held in April.

The arrest of Ocalan, the burly leader of the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), is a source of national pride for the Turkish security forces, which have been fighting a bitter war with PKK guerrillas for more than 10 years. Indeed, Ankara hopes that a high-profile trial and possible death sentence for Ocalan will deal a severe blow to Kurdish nationalism in Turkey. By extension, the Ecevit government is also trying to use the Ocalan capture as a message of toughness to the country's never-say-die Islamists.

Turkish newspapers are full of praise for the government operation which brought Ocalan to Turkey in handcuffs, a promise that the government had made two months ago when the PKK leader emerged from hiding and sought political asylum in Italy.

In general, Tuesday and Wednesday were days of joy and

celebrations for Turks. Or were they, really?

Of course, for all those Turks who do not want to acknowledge their government's treatment of the Kurds, the capture of Ocalan was a great and happy event because the PKK leader is painted in the mainstream Turkish media as a bloodthirsty, ruthless killer who stops at nothing. But the capture of Ocalan is a most distressing and humiliating event for the Kurds of Turkey.

After all, there are eight million Kurds in the Turkish population. For a majority then, Ocalan represents their aspirations to preserve their Kurdish identity and the right to live in dignity. But the Kurdish dreams are anathema to the Ankara government, which has repeatedly turned down calls for peace talks from Ocalan and other PKK leaders which could produce a way out of the quagmire.

On several occasions, the Turkish government, which describes Ocalan and his PKK supporters as terrorists, has rejected ceasefire calls by Ocalan. Acknowledging and accepting such truces, according to Ankara's thinking, is tantamount to recognising the legitimacy

of the Kurdish struggle.

The history of the Kurds is a litany of struggle, hopes, unkept promises and oppression, whether in Turkey, Iran or Iraq (incidentally, the central government in Iraq treated Iraqi Kurds much better than its neighbours; they were allowed the use of their language in education and permitted to set up their own largely autonomous administration in northern Iraq, because Baghdad had accepted that the Kurdish aspirations could not be put down militarily. Of course that is not to overlook the heinous assaults the Iraqi army mounted on Kurdish villagers at the end of the Iraq-Iran war. The pretext was that Kurds living on the border with Iran were a security risk for the country. Although there can be no justification for the attacks which killed thousands of Kurds, many experts in the region do acknowledge that it was largely an isolated operation.)

Ocalan is no innocent. His forces have killed Turkish soldiers, so-called village guards and civilians in the Kurdish heartland of Turkey. According to Ankara, he could be held responsible for the death of

All lose in week of 'geek' diplomacy

Out of Order



Brian Brown

EVER HAD a bad week? If so, you may be in a position to appreciate the past week that a number of oppressed ethnic minorities, Mediterranean countries, and embassies located in Europe have had to live through. Following the capture of PKK chief Abdullah Ocalan, all hell, as the saying goes, broke loose. Diplomatic missions were stormed by the dozen all over the world, riot police and Kurdish protesters fought disrupting pitched battles in major cities, government ministers were fired left and right, and a cameraman for the Turkish intelligence services got plenty of evidently needed practice with his camcorder filming Ocalan in a number of venues and poses. Usually, in such situations, at least one of the involved parties manages to rise above the chaos and come out a winner. But this time, in a testimony to the ineptness of all groups connected with the Ocalan affair, everyone came out a loser.

The Kurds so far have been the ones who have endured the most since Ocalan was abducted. Not only had the leader of their movement been captured, he had also been shown repeatedly humiliated (and humiliating himself) in the videotape of his capture broadcast on Turkish TV. It must have been difficult for Kurdish protesters to shout anti-Turkey slogans one moment, then in the next see Ocalan, who launched the PKK's armed struggle that has claimed over 30,000 lives, explaining how he wants to serve the Turkish people, whom he "loves". It seems that guerrilla leaders have slipped a notch or two in the defiance department since the days of Mao and Ho Chi Minh.

Worse developments, however, were yet to come. The Kurdish demonstrators' occupation of virtually every Greek embassy and consulate in Europe was, for the most part, peaceful (i.e., no deaths and/or grievous bodily harm), if somewhat rowdy. After a group of Kurds entered the headquarters of a Swiss socialist party, a party spokesperson described the protesters as "guests" and said the action was a "democratic means" of expression. British police allowed a group to take over a busy intersection for an entire night, before persuading them to continue their protest on a less busy street. Even hostage situations were

peacefully resolved through negotiations. But then a group of Kurdish protesters picked the wrong mission to occupy in Berlin, a mistake that would cost three lives. These deaths happened at none other than, not surprisingly, the Israeli consulate. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, explaining how the only Kurdish action of this kind that turned deadly, said the shootings were necessary to protect Israeli "property." This statement may sound callous and shocking, but remember, it was the Israeli consulate. Perhaps the guards at the mission that day were on vacation from south Lebanon or the occupied territories and let the fact slip their minds.

After the Kurds, the next biggest losers were the Greeks. In a brilliant demonstration of how trying to please everyone results in pleasing no one, the Greeks managed to shoot themselves in both feet by angering both the Kurds and the Turks. Kurdish anger at Greece for allowing Ocalan to fall into Turkish hands was manifested in the mass embassy occupations, which resulted in costly material damage and the threat of more violent actions, such as possible bombings. Turkey, for its part, was incensed that arch-rival Greece had led it to about harbouring its most wanted fugitive, and used the episode to undermine Greek claims that it had never supported the PKK, regarded by many Western governments as a terrorist organisation. Several ministers have already gotten the boot, the prime minister himself is under fire, and the entire country has been shamed by losing out on something it should not have even become involved in. One can imagine that other governments in the future, when involved in a diplomatic blunder, may be described as engaging in a bit of "Greek diplomacy." This, in turn, would lend itself to the following punline: "Greek diplomacy is geek diplomacy."

Finally, we come to the only party that should have benefited from the arrest of Ocalan: Turkey. On the surface, everything looks rosy: Public Enemy Number 1 is behind bars, the fractious spectrum of Turkish politics has united, albeit briefly in most likelihood, and Greece has been humiliated. But this victory may become bittersweet. What will happen when the

trial of Ocalan gets under way? The eyes of the whole world, and Europe especially, will be on Turkey to see if the country continues its dismal record of justice and human rights in Kurdish-related affairs. The trial could finally close the book on Turkey's dream of joining the EU, especially if a death sentence is handed down. If, on the other hand, the trial is fair and open, and Ocalan develops a spine before then, the truth and facts of the Kurdish problem in Turkey may reach a world audience, something that would not be to the benefit of either party, considering the questionable actions of both the PKK and the Turkish army in the now 14-year conflict. Turkey, however, as an established government, stands to lose more than the PKK if any disagreeable revelations result from the trial.

One bad week is over. But with the questions which the Ocalan affair has raised, and which no one seems too intent on answering, there promises to be many more bad weeks in the future.

RECOMMENDED READING: The Foundation Trilogy, by Isaac Asimov. This three-book series tells the story of the collapse of an ancient intergalactic empire and its successor, which has been planned by a group of innocent-looking scientists to be a more lasting and fairer establishment. Written in the late 1950s by one of the acknowledged science fiction masters, The Foundation Trilogy still stands as a fascinating story of empires in the distant future as well as a commentary on the repeating cycles of history.

Footnote

BAGHDAD HAS increasingly been flexing its muscles lately and issuing renewed threats not only to shoot down U.S. and British warplanes flying over the no-fly zones, but also to strike at military bases in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. The Russian connection seems all too clear in this confident Iraqi display.

Reports from Moscow and Baghdad indicate that the two countries have recently struck a new multi-million dollar arms deal to upgrade Iraq's air defences, which could restore the Arab country's air force and anti-aircraft batteries to their pre-Gulf war levels. Earlier reports speak of Russian reparation of Iraq's communication networks destroyed by the U.S. air strikes. Moscow set the stage for this Russian-Iraqi cooperation when it too joined the

chorus of international voices questioning the legitimacy of the no-fly zones imposed on Iraq and condemning air strikes. Moscow spearheaded the campaign against Richard Butler and UNSCOM. Without this Russian connection, Iraq could not and would not show so much confidence in confronting the U.S. and Britain.

The question that may haunt Baghdad is whether the Russian Federation is prepared to bargain away this Iraqi alliance for the sake of a bigger stake, leaving Iraq stranded. In other words, is the Russian-Iraqi connection a mere ploy to attain other strategic interests or a bridgehead for Moscow's strategic interests in the Gulf region?

Letters of condolence

THE FORMER students of Victoria College, Egypt, mourn one of their own. His Majesty King Hussein Ben Talal.

On behalf of all the former students, we extend our deepest and heartfelt sympathy to the people of Jordan and to the family of His Majesty.

The world mourns his tragic passing, a world that was much brighter with his presence.

We pray for God's blessing on his soul.

Classes of '42, '44, '45, '46, '47, '49, '50, '51, '52, '53, '54, '55, '56, '57, '62
 Victoria College

I WANT to pass along my deepest sympathy to the people of Jordan and to the family of His Majesty King Hussein. He was a great man and will deeply be missed by the world as a man of peace and deep wisdom. My prayers are with HM King Abdullah as he assumes the leadership of Jordan. In the six weeks I was there, I came to love the country and the people of Jordan, and share in the deep grief of the death of HM King Hussein.

Lieutenant Colonel James (Jim) Drinnon
 U.S.

WE WERE sad to hear of the death of King Hussein. Please extend our condolences to the Royal family and the people of Jordan.

We lived in Jordan from 1982-86 and that was one of the happiest times in our lives. Our son was born there and the hospitality and warmth of the people of Jordan gave us a feeling of well-being, contentment and security.

The charm and aura of kindness and sincerity emitted by King Hussein deeply attached us to him. Our son saw him as "My King." We wish his successor, King Abdullah, the wisdom, courage and strength to continue his father's aim of maintaining peace, prosperity and contentment for his people. We hope he can achieve an harmonious relationship with all the neighbouring countries in the Middle East.

The Nass family,
 Falkenstein
 Germany.

I WOULD like to extend my heartfelt condolences to the Royal family and the people of Jordan, on the loss of His Majesty King Hussein. May you rest in peace Your Majesty.

Samer H. Petro
 U.S.

Kurds dominate column inches

Compiled by
 Mohammad Ben Hussein

Columnists last week commented on Abdullah Ocalan's arrest, Iraq threats to attack American bases in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Turkey and the confederation between Jordan and the PNA areas.

Al Dustour's Oreih Rintawi slammed Turkey for arresting the Kurdish rebels leader Abdullah Ocalan saying that Ocalan's arrest or even the killing of the rebel leader will not end the Kurdish problem.

The Turkish-Kurdish war has cost Turkey around \$100 billion and claimed around 30,000 lives on both sides, said the writer.

Rintawi charged that Turkey's bid to solve the problem by raising living standards is doomed to fail because the Kurds are seeking ethnic and cultural recognition. The Kurdish demands are legitimate and should not be faced with violence and anger, said the writer. Only through diplomatic channels and a negotiated settlement can an end be put to the war, said the writer, and then only if Turkey grants the Kurds linguistic and cultural freedom, recognition as a separate people and a measure of autonomy. It is true that Turkey was able to crack down on Kurdish rebels in the southern part of the country and follow them inside Iraq's borders, but Ocalan's case has proved that military success is not the end of the problem since the Kurds have been able to manifest their presence throughout Europe and even inside Turkey, noted the writer. Ocalan was arrested, but the Kurdish people are far from the Turkish prisons, and though Ocalan and his party may be defeated, the Kurdish problem will remain for as long as Kurds exist and Turkish ethnic discrimination continues, concluded the writer.

Al Dustour's Yaqoub Jahre said whether Turkey executes Abdullah Ocalan or not, his cause will be alive as long as there are oppressed Kurds suffering under severe economic and social conditions. For millions of Kurds, Ocalan is only a symbol of the revolution and if this flame is put out, it will not be the end of the Kurdish cause, said Jahre. From now on Turkey must expect more violence and bloody war, and judging by Kurdish reactions after Ocalan's arrest proves the Kurdish determination to continue their struggle with or without him, said Jahre. Turkey should understand that the only solution to the Kurdish prob-

lem is through dialogue; Ocalan has repeatedly announced his willingness to negotiate with Ankara and abandon the armed struggle, added the writer.

Al Ra'i's Mahmoud Rimawi criticised Iraq for threatening to attack American bases in the Gulf and Turkey. Such threats, he said, will only complicate Iraq's situation; the conflict is between Baghdad and Washington not Iraq and its neighbours. Turkey cannot prevent U.S. and British forces from using its airbases because it is a member of NATO.

Saudi Arabia and Kuwait both have a military agreement with the United States after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1991. Iraq needs good relations with its Arab neighbours, which should be based on trust as well as forgiveness, said Rimawi. Such Arab understanding, if it occurs, might not stop the American strikes immediately, but if differences between Baghdad and Kuwait are overcome, it could lead to a better solution, added Rimawi. An agreement will lead to the long-awaited Arab general summit which will bring Arabs back together, said Rimawi. Iraq might be excused for losing patience, after repeated air strikes and eight years of crippling sanctions, but still duty obliges it to find a proper way out of its plight with its neighbours and the West, and not complicating matters with meaningless threats, added the writer. And the best way for Iraq to salvage its people from their suffering is through Arab understanding which will only be forthcoming if Iraq manages to gain Arab, and especially Gulf countries' trust, he concluded.

Al Ra'i's Tareq Massarwah said confederation between Jordan and the Palestinian National Authority areas which had been suggested by Palestinian President Yasser Arafat will not help Palestinians gain their own identity, and will also severely harm Jordan. Everyone knows how much the Palestinians are suffering, said the writer, but such an idea will not accommodate Palestinian desire to have a secure, independent state recognised by the world at large, nor end Israeli occupation of Arab land. Confederation will not provide the Palestinians with freedom while it is under Israeli occupation, said the writer. No one in Jordan will abandon the Palestinians, but at the same time Jordan's strategic depth lies with Syria and Iraq not Israel, said Massarwah.

SHIP AHOY!
 By Arthur S. Verdecca

Arrest unites Europe's Kurds in indignation

By Roger Cohen

FOR A decade, Kurds have been coming to Germany seeking political asylum, and on Thursday one of them, Amin Aram, walked into the Kurdish Community Center here, took a tea from a friend and declared, "Every one of us, without exception, is angry."

A window cleaner, Aram, 31, is one of 210,000 Kurds who have come here since 1989, fleeing various forms of violence. Unlike Abdullah Ocalan, the Kurdish rebel leader arrested by Turkish agents on Monday, he is from Iraq, not Turkey. He says that he is no supporter of Ocalan's Kurdish Labour Party.

Such political divisions have long undermined the scattered Kurds in their battle for a homeland. But for the overwhelming majority of the estimated 850,000 Kurds now living in Europe, Ocalan's arrest constitutes a moment when differences are swept away, however fleetingly, by a shared sense of outrage.

"The American government says Ocalan is a terrorist," Aram said. "But my family was called 'terrorists' by Saddam Hussein just because we are Kurds. Then he killed my mother, three brothers and two sisters in a chemical-weapons attack on the town of Halabja. Whatever group we are from, we cannot accept Ocalan's arrest."

Long focused on the problems arising from the fight for new nation-states in the Balkans, European governments have abruptly awakened this week to another conflict in their midst, one quietly fed over many years by a fast-growing Kurdish diaspora in Europe, which this week revealed an ability to organise, communicate and act.

Even as Kurds on Thursday ended a three-day occupation of the Greek embassy in London and protests in most places abated, tension remained high.

In Germany, where three Kurds were killed by Israeli security guards on Wednesday as they tried to enter Israel's Berlin consulate, Kurdish protesters hurled gasoline bombs on Thursday through the windows of a Turkish cultural centre in Heilbronn and attacked visitors with baseball bats. Three people were injured.

Elsewhere, gasoline bombs were thrown at two Turkish

travel agencies in the port of Bremen, Germany, and Kurdish protesters forced their way into the regional U.N. headquarters in Vienna, Austria.

Conversations with Kurds in several European countries suggest that the broad show of defiance this week reflected developments likely to weigh on the continent for some time: the growing sophistication of Ocalan's movement, which has waged a separatist

interior and public order resigned as public criticism raged over the country's role in the arrest of Ocalan. And Kenya, where Ocalan was seized after leaving the Greek embassy in Nairobi, also reshuffled its cabinet.

The arrest followed several months of detention and flight in Italy, Russia, Greece and elsewhere — a fugitive existence for Ocalan that, it now seems, provided a kind of slow-motion prologue to the

important base for U.S. air patrols over Iraq.

Nezan suggested that an effect of U.S. policy and European governments' acquiescence to it had been to drive moderate Kurds toward sympathy for Ocalan's violent movement. Kurds, he added, had become convinced that the strategic importance of Turkey to the United States was such that no Kurdish claims would ever be recognised, let alone backed, in Washington.

educate their children in their own language. A ban imposed by Turkey's last military government on the use of the Kurdish language in unofficial settings was lifted in 1991, but Kurdish remains illegal in broadcasts or in educational or political settings, and there is a campaign under way to ban Turkey's main pro-Kurdish party.

Turks and Kurds have exchanged atrocities in recent years as Turkey tries to eradicate any Kurdish drive for autonomy or independence.

Faced by the explosive complexity of recognizing any Kurdish claims, the frequent ruthlessness of Ocalan's methods and the importance of Turkey as a NATO ally, Western governments have generally preferred to look the other way, accepting Kurdish refugees as a bearable price.

Nowhere has that stream of refugees been more intense than in Germany, which has Europe's most liberal asylum laws. Indeed, with more than 2 million Turks and about 500,000 Kurds now in the country, the potential for further violence here is evident.

Civan Bahoz, a member of the Kurdish Association for Culture and Mutual Support, said that, like most Kurds in Germany, he rejected Ocalan's violent methods. But at the same time he felt enraged by the way Ocalan was treated.

"Although I reject force, I somehow understand what the protesters feel," he said. "Ocalan has been humiliated. Europe now has to understand that if it does not want Kurdish problems settled on its streets, it must see that its NATO partner, Turkey, complies with rules that govern any democratic country."

Like several other Kurds, Bahoz said it would have been far better if Germany had agreed to try Ocalan, because at least he would have been assured a fair trial. The German government declined to request his extradition from Italy to face various charges because of fear of the potentially explosive domestic consequences.

German officials said that the influence of the Kurdish Labour Party had clearly been growing and that many of the cultural and other associations in this country were merely fronts for the organisation. Fund-raising — involving pressure on Kurdish stores and businesses — was brisk and efficient, they said.

"The Workers Party was once quite marginal," said Barbara John, Berlin's commissioner for the affairs of foreigners. "But the various Kurdish associations have gradually been drawn toward it. I would not say the party is the mainstream, but it is now the undisputed representative of the fight for autonomy."

She added that by being extremely naive in its policies toward asylum seekers and by failing to recognise that the admission of hundreds of thousands of Kurds would inevitably have consequences, Germany now finds itself in a very delicate situation in which "the question of immigration and foreigners could become really poisonous."

Apparently aware of this danger of a backlash, Kurdish community leaders throughout Europe appealed on Thursday for calm. "We appeal to our compatriots to behave in a level-headed way," said a statement from the Kurdish Community in Berlin.

It is clear, however, that if level-headedness was not conspicuous in recent days, it was not merely because of spontaneous anger. Faruk Sarhat, a Paris-based member of Ocalan's movement, said the party's central committee had the means to quickly contact party cells and Kurdish cultural organisations throughout the continent.

"Our central committee said protests should be democratic, but Ocalan is more than our party," said Sarhat, who described himself as a member of the Kurdish Labour Party although he formally represents a front organisation called the Kurdistan National Liberation Front. "The kind of anger his arrest generated cannot be controlled, especially when the role of the Israelis and Americans was so clear."

Like many Kurds, Sarhat argued that Turkey does not have the resources to swoop on Ocalan and arrest him in the

heart of Africa without assistance from other intelligence services. On Wednesday, the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, adamantly denied any Israeli role in Ocalan's capture. The denial by the United States was less vehement.

Whatever the resources of Turkey, those of Kurdish groups in Europe are clearly considerable, including a Kurdish-language satellite television channel based in London that appears to have played an important role in spreading the word of Ocalan's arrest.

"The party is very active in the diaspora extracting money from Kurds, and the evidence

of drug trafficking is also persuasive," said Ransborg, the expert on Middle Eastern affairs. "It is a sophisticated, organised guerrilla organisation."

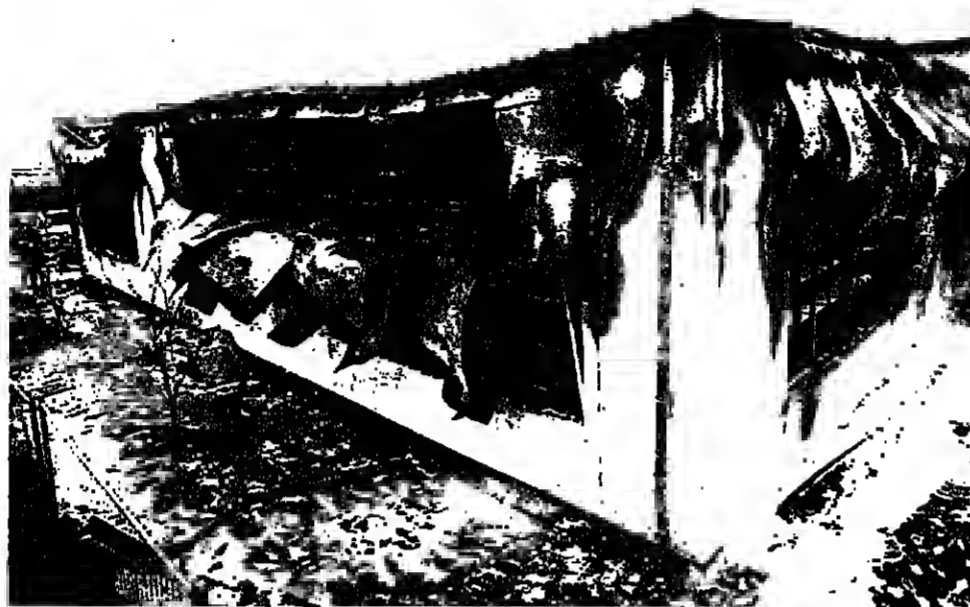
Evidence of Ocalan's personal influence was clear this week in the attempts at self-immolation by several protesters. Like Ho Chi Minh, of whom he is a great admirer, Ocalan likes to be called "Uncle" ("Apo" in Kurdish), and he frequently called his followers' attention to the Vietnamese use of immolation as a method of protest, Nezan said.

But at the time of his arrest, several Kurdish officials said, he appeared to have been cast-

ing around for some kind of political or diplomatic way out of the cycle of violence. Any possibility of this now appears to have been dashed, especially if Ocalan's trial in Turkey should end in a death sentence — an explosive possibility for a Europe full of disgruntled Kurds.

"I do not support the methods of the Kurdish Labour Party," said Kader Al-Yousef, a Kurdish technician in Berlin who came to Germany as a student 24 years ago from Syria. "But I cannot condemn its objective when all it does is fight for our right to a homeland."

— The New York Times



The burnt-out facade of a warehouse belonging to Turkish nationals in Lehrte, northern Germany, yesterday, after being destroyed by fire overnight. The blaze follows a wave of attacks on Turkish interests in Germany after the capture of Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan. No one was injured (AFP photo)

war in southeastern Turkey that has left 30,000 dead; anger stronger than any internal Kurdish differences, and the helter-skelter growth of a Kurdish population in Europe that had come to represent a large pool of restive national sentiment.

Magnus Ransborg, an expert on Middle Eastern Affairs at St. Andrew University in Scotland, said: "The arrest of Ocalan has united the Kurdish nation."

He added: "What European governments do not see is that in many ways the Kurdish struggle reflects the early days of the Palestinian struggle, putting an issue on the international agenda through terrorism. The situation could become more and more inflamed."

current drama, fuelling the Kurds' anger and sense of abandonment.

"I tried to warn Western governments this would happen," said Kendal Nezan, the chairman of the moderate Kurdish Institute of Paris, which opposes the guerrilla tactics of Ocalan's followers. "I said, 'give Ocalan asylum in exchange for a formal renunciation of violence.' But the Italian government told me there was too much diplomatic pressure from America and too much economic pressure from Turkey."

The United States has defined the Kurdish Labour Party as a terrorist organisation and in recent months has persistently expressed quiet support for Ocalan's arrest and his handover to Turkey, which is a critical NATO ally and an

"Of the 850,000 Kurds in the European Union, probably 10 per cent are in Ocalan's movement, and some are very militant," he said. "But a lot of people don't like his methods at all. Still, in the end they are led to feel sympathy because they are so revolted by Western policies."

More than 20 million Kurds live in an area that sprawls across southeastern Turkey, Syria, Iran and Iraq. Of these, perhaps 10 million live in Turkey, where they had been promised a homeland in the 1920 Treaty of Severs after the fall of the Ottoman Empire. But plans for a Kurdish homeland were dashed when Mustafa Kemal Ataturk fought to regain the land.

In Turkey, Kurds are not recognised as a minority, a status that would allow them to

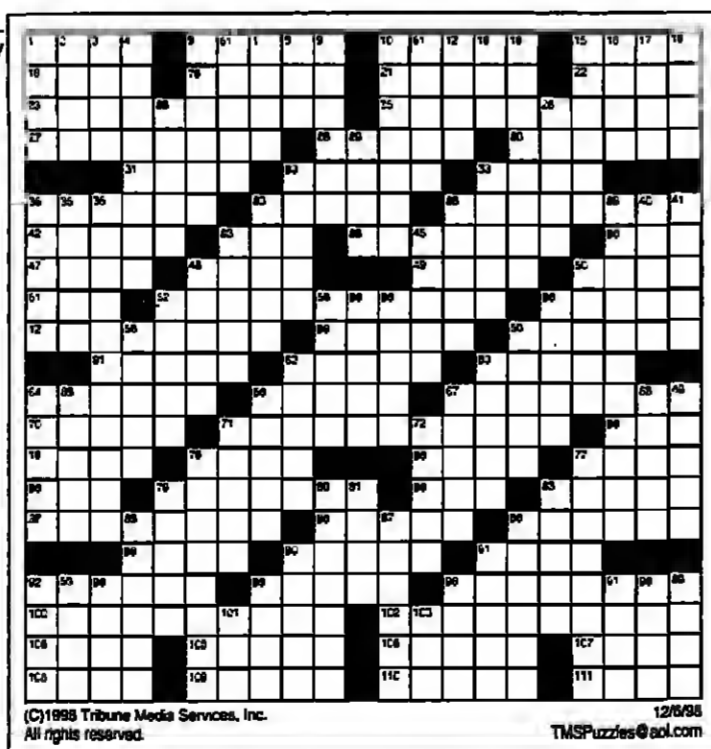
The Saturday Crossword

SHIP AHOY!

By Arthur S. Verdesca, Morristown, New Jersey

- ACROSS
- 1 Wedge for stopping
 - 3 Lucine of the New York Metropolitan Opera
 - 10 Neil Lazarus comic strip
 - 15 Breathe heavily
 - 19 Emerald Isle
 - 20 Chan's portrayal in film
 - 21 Lake Geneva spa
 - 22 Herman Melville's "Typee" sequel
 - 23 STEAMER
 - 25 SCHOONER
 - 27 Lip curlers
 - 28 Chicago airport
 - 30 Erects
 - 31 Goose on Oahu
 - 32 Author of "Mistral Nautique"
 - 33 Clumsy clog
 - 34 Vents at will
 - 35 French Open winner of 1993
 - 36 Eau de ...
 - 42 Loathed
 - 43 Small, low islet
 - 45 Precincts
 - 46 Auto gear; abbr.
 - 47 Got a perfect grade
 - 48 Body of a ship
 - 49 Residents of suit
 - 50 Walking stick
 - 51 Ostrich's letters
 - 52 TENDER
 - 56 More timid
 - 57 Desserted
 - 58 Sniffers a fugitive.
 - 60 Evasive
 - 61 Destined
 - 62 Grain-grained cornflour
 - 63 Baby grand, e.g.
 - 64 Mental health
 - 66 Mid top, once
 - 67 Eastern Hemisphere
 - 70 Long time pill
 - 71 LINER
 - 72 Pipe buildup
 - 74 Touch against
 - 75 Loris in eight movies
 - 76 Top-notch
 - 77 Eight bits
 - 78 Adams
 - 79 World with bridge or wagon
 - 82 New Zealand canal
 - 83 Fear and May, e.g.

- 84 One who makes ready
- 86 Actress Phoebe
- 88 Light beams
- 89 Sea east of the Caspian
- 90 Shroud of ...
- 91 God of war
- 92 Rocks
- 95 Come-across
- 96 Russian despot, Ivan the ...
- 100 BARK
- 102 CLIPPER
- 104 Wood trimmer
- 105 Poetic muse
- 106 Eradicate
- 107 Watch over
- 108 State of mind
- 109 Gauss's address
- 110 Also-ran
- 111 Influence
- DOWN
- 1 Min. parts
- 2 Baking chamber
- 3 Wrath of Caesar
- 4 Insane
- 5 University of Georgia's city
- 6 Sculptor Henry
- 7 Muhammad and others
- 8 Game room, for short
- 9 Space between leaf veins
- 10 Hodgepodge
- 11 Egg-producing organ
- 12 Sick in the mud
- 13 Periodical, briefly
- 14 Some barometers
- 15 Civil
- 16 Amo. ... amat ...
- 17 Rocker cap
- 18 Fling
- 19 Compassion of heart
- 20 "Frank's" predecessors
- 21 Posterior
- 22 Biology kingdom
- 23 divisions
- 24 Hermit
- 25 Clearly detailed
- 26 Expectant dad, e.g.
- 27 JUNK
- 28 Sooths
- 29 Heads of France
- 30 GALLEY
- 31 Doctrine
- 41 ... now and again
- 42 Made well
- 43 Granite bar?
- 44 Bee product
- 45 Coarse, balled cotton fabric
- 52 Comic Aristotle
- 53 Hobbit
- 54 West Indian religious belief
- 55 Physicist Enrico
- 56 Shoulder warmer
- 57 Dim
- 58 Edge along
- 59 Blooper
- 60 First choice of schemes
- 61 Head skin
- 62 Shaded area
- 63 Supply the food
- 64 Some woodwinds
- 65 Some time after
- 66 Apparel
- 67 Rundown dwelling
- 68 Already claimed
- 69 Swamps
- 70 Members of mythic sections
- 71 Showed concern
- 72 Outer land
- 73 Mild oath
- 74 Keep in stock
- 75 Renewed harshly
- 76 December decoration
- 77 Pantry
- 78 Lone Ranger's pal
- 79 Former Attorney General Edwin
- 80 Junk e-mail
- 81 Fuss
- 82 Amassed-flavored liqueur
- 83 San ... Puerto Rico
- 84 Assam and police
- 85 "Toosed
- 86 Singer Home
- 87 Whipcord
- 88 Bazzite or galena
- 89 In favor of



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JOB VACANCY

ACCOMMODATION OFFICER, BRITISH EMBASSY, AMMAN

Applicants should have experience in the management of accommodation, both residential and office premises, particularly in areas such as leasing, maintenance and all aspects of related financial management. Good interpersonal skills and commitment to customer care are needed, together with a high level of both written and spoken English and Arabic, and good computer skills.

Applications should be addressed to:

Management Officer
British Embassy
P.O. Box 87
Amman 11118

Envelopes should be clearly marked "Employment-Accommodation".

CVs should reach the Management Officer by 4 March 1999.

Interviews will be held during the week commencing 21 March.

Applicants who cannot make themselves available during that week should indicate this when submitting their applications.

COMMERCIAL VACANCIES IN THE BRITISH EMBASSY

The Commercial Section of the British Embassy requires staff to help promote British business interests in Jordan.

COMMERCIAL OFFICER (1 POST)

This job will involve:-

- identifying commercial opportunities for British companies with particular responsibility for allocated industrial/commercial sectors
- delivery of a range of support services for UK exporting companies
- making initiative visits to Jordanian companies
- supplying market information and sector reports regularly to companies and organisations in the UK
- organising and participating in commercial events
- briefing business visitors

This is a senior representational position and the successful candidate will be confident, educated to University degree standard, fluent in Arabic & English (oral and written) and computer literate. He/she will have a good knowledge of business in Jordan, an ability to cultivate business contacts at senior level and a sound appreciation of international trade matters. There is a requirement for regular work outside of normal office hours, travel within Jordan and more occasionally to other countries in the Middle-East and to the UK. Car ownership is desirable (an allowance is payable).

COMMERCIAL ASSISTANT (2 POSTS)

Post 1. Direct support for a Commercial Officer including research into specific industrial/commercial sectors, answering enquiries from British and Jordanian companies, drafting preparation and despatch of tailored market reports for companies in the UK.

Post 2. Front-line enquiry officer able to deal with the public and to answer written and telephone enquiries, provide clerical support to the whole Section and manage the Section's file store (registry and company database).

A good level of IT and Internet user skills is required for both of these positions and a very good standard of written and spoken English is essential.

Applications specifying which post you are applying for with a CV should be addressed to

The Commercial Secretary
The British Embassy
P.O. Box 6062 Amman

Closing date 7 March 1999

Candidates chosen for interview will be provided with a more detailed job description and conditions of service.

Jordan, IMF broadly agree on three-year programme

By Suleiman Al Khalidi
Reuters

AMMAN — Ziyad Fariz, governor of the Central Bank of Jordan, said Thursday a three-year programme with the IMF had been broadly agreed but talks would continue on a number of outstanding issues.

Fariz declined to give details and would not say when a final draft

would be ready for presentation to the IMF board in Washington. IMF officials said in Amman this week they expected the programme to be put to the board some time in March.

"The elements of the new programme have been agreed. The framework at large has been agreed upon together with the IMF," Fariz told Reuters.

"We have concluded

the initial agreement... There are no problems that obstruct the agreement with the fund," he added.

Officials said technical committees would continue in both Washington and Amman to iron out final details — including the exact level of IMF assistance — before the Jordanian government and the IMF finally seal the package.

IMF first managing director Stanley Fischer, who visited Amman last week, declined to give details on the amounts involved in the new package, which would extend a 10-year loan programme due to end this month.

The old deal gave \$331 million a year to Jordan, although after payments the country is only left with around \$50 million.

Jordanian officials said the new plan would give Jordan an extra \$150 million a year.

They said the new loan, tied to fiscal restraint, and economic reform, would help to bring the budget deficit down to its target of seven per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) this year against 10 per cent last year. Its main significance would be endorsement of Jordan's

economic policies by the world body.

The 1999 budget forecasts a deficit of 435 million dinars — or seven per cent of GDP — to be covered by soft loans and extra borrowing from international and domestic markets.

Officials said the new programme envisages economic growth will rise by the end of the three-year period to four per cent from a project-

ed two per cent in 1999.

Jordan posted negative growth last year, the worst performance since an economic crisis in 1989, independent economists said. The government put last year's GDP growth at 2.5 per cent and forecast three per cent growth this year — still below rates of population growth.

Fischer said the conclusion of the IMF programme would also help

Jordan's efforts to reschedule Paris Club debt.

Officials hope an outpouring of global sympathy for Jordan after King Hussein's death will translate into tangible commitments of aid, already pledged by its Western and Arab friends to underpin domestic stability.

Group of Seven to back global cooperation, but no radical reform

FRANKFURT (R) — Group of Seven (G-7) financial leaders, who will meet in Bonn Saturday to discuss the global economy, have just one concrete proposal on the table to help prevent crises like those in Asia and Russia.

The proposal, drawn up by Bundesbank President Hans Tietmeyer, foresees greater cooperation between the world's watchdog authorities and supranational institutions with the aim of nipping problems in the bud through information transfer.

G-7 sources say it is the only fresh idea on the agenda with a good chance of clear backing from the rich-nation group.

More radical measures, such as the creation of a global network of currency target zones to limit speculative pressures, have been brushed aside by the United States as an out-dated attempt to rein in financial markets by artificial means.

Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin left no doubt that the United States had little sympathy for such a radical new currency regime, insisting that currency stability was the product of fundamentally sound economic policies.

"We think the way to achieve stability is through fundamental economic policy," Rubin said.

German Finance Minister Oskar Lafontaine, once a vocal proponent of a new currency

regime to help dampen global financial volatility, has since shifted his focus to the Asian currencies which plunged when crisis hit there in 1997.

But plans to limit moves there through pegging to some sort of currency basket are still, at best, vague.

The G-7 — grouping Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States — has differing views on whether such a system would make sense and would have only a sideline role in the implementation of such a system anyway.

Discussions of the world economy will play a prominent role in the talks but are not expected to produce any surprising new conclusions. Russian representatives will be present for part of the afternoon session to discuss the continuing problems there.

As things stand, the only real step forward on Saturday aside from the familiar affirmations of general cooperation, looks set to come from Tietmeyer's proposal — the result of a project he was assigned last October.

The Bundesbank has declined direct comment on a report this week in the French newspaper Le Monde, which quoted from a 10-page report saying Tietmeyer would propose a stability forum be set up to limit risks of economic crisis contagion.

Such a proposal, which would avoid the creation of a special new body to handle the

issue, but rather improve coordination between existing institutions, appears very likely in the view of statements Tietmeyer has made in the past.

At the International Monetary Fund (IMF) meeting in Washington last August, his railing at proposals from Britain and others that the world needed a "new financial architecture" contributed heavily to his being asked to study ways to improve the old one.

Tietmeyer is likely to strengthen the micro aspects of the current financial and banking regulation system and seek more cooperation... but stay away from asking for a new big institution," said Goldman Sachs senior economist Thomas Mayer.

If such a forum were set up on an informal basis, it is expected that the Bretton Woods organisations — the International Monetary Fund and World Bank — would participate alongside the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Financial regulators from major countries, and possibly from some emerging countries, would also find a place at the table, with the overall number being capped at no more than about 40.

Meetings would take place on occasions when many of those involved were already present — for example on the sidelines of the World Bank and Inter-

national Monetary Fund meetings in April and September/October each year.

According to Le Monde, BIS chairman Andrew Crockett would head up the forum.

Currently, such watchdog and surveillance organisations work extremely independently.

Tensions and overlaps are sometimes seen even at the World Bank and IMF — despite the fact they are headquartered within walking distance of each other in Washington and hold coordinated semi-annual meetings.

At the national level, increased links between insurance companies and banks — in Germany for example — are already posing the question of the need for greater cooperation between the bodies which regulate these industries.

But even if the Tietmeyer proposal is accepted without change — it appears pre-programmed that the agreement will be marketed differently by politicians across the G-7 spectrum.

Those, such as British Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown, who have campaigned hardest for a "new architecture" will no doubt acclaim the forum fits the bill even if Tietmeyer himself portrays it as fine-tuning of the old one.

Israel seeks to bolster trade ties with Jordan

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel said Thursday it was looking for ways to expand trade and investment ties with Jordan.

"We believe that in view of the untimely death of King Hussein it is more important than ever to find additional ways to bolster Jordan's economy and improve economic ties with the Kingdom," said Eli Kazhdan of Israel's trade ministry.

"We have held a series of meetings in the ministry to find additional ways to improve trade and economic relations between the countries," he added.

"We are trying to put together certain ideas to propose and discuss with our Jordanian counterparts. We hope to implement some of them in the near future," Kazhdan, a senior adviser to Industry and Trade Minister Nathan Shtrasky, told Reuters.

He said the proposals included lowering import tariffs, easing the flow of goods between Jordan and Palestinian-ruled areas and embarking on joint research and development projects.

"We are also looking into ways to promote bilateral projects with the United States. This is based on discussions we have already held with U.S. officials," Kazhdan said.

Israeli-Jordanian trade grew last year by 25 per cent to \$40 million. Israel's manufacturers' association estimated the total value of Israeli-Jordanian joint ventures at \$300 million.

Earlier in the month, the association urged the two countries to strive to increase two-way trade to \$400 million.

Exchange Rates Thursday, 16-02-99

	US DOLLAR	GERMAN MARK	FRANCE FRANC	UK POUND	ITALY LIRA	SPAIN PESA	NETHERLANDS GILDER	SWITZERLAND FRANC	AUSTRIA SCHILLING	CANADA DOLLAR	EURO
JORDAN DINAR	1.0000	0.1888	0.1927	1.8778	1.8389	0.1944	2.3322	0.2075	0.7080		
BAHRAIN DINAR	5.2977	1.0000	1.0209	9.9460	9.7421	1.0300	12.3552	1.0991	3.7598		
LAOS KIP	5.1893	0.8795	1.0000	9.7443	9.5426	1.0089	12.1022	1.0768	3.6740		
BAHRAIN DINAR	0.5325	0.1005	0.1026	1.0000	0.8793	1.0000	1.2682	0.1128	0.3770		
LIBYAN DINAR	0.5438	0.1026	0.1046	1.0211	1.0000	1.0000	11.9952	1.0670	3.6415		
YEMEN RYAL	5.1434	0.9709	0.9812	9.5581	9.4582	1.0000	11.9952	1.0670	3.6415		
KUWAIT DINAR	0.4288	0.0600	0.0626	0.8052	0.7885	0.8634	1.0000	0.0890	0.3036		
QATAR RIAL	4.8202	0.9009	0.9289	9.0513	8.8539	0.9372	11.2415	1.0000	3.4127		
LEBANON LIRA	21.4831	4.0551	4.1399	40.3400	39.5055	4.1769	50.1021	4.4569	15.2100		
US DOLLAR	1.4124	0.2666	0.2722	2.8522	2.5973	0.2746	3.2940	0.2930	1.0000		
GERMAN MARK	0.8631	0.1629	0.1663	1.6207	1.5871	0.1678	2.0128	0.1791	0.6111		
FRANCE FRANC	2.4514	0.4627	0.4724	4.6032	4.5079	0.4766	5.7171	0.5086	1.7358		
NETHERLANDS GILDER	2.0038	0.3762	0.3861	3.7627	3.6840	0.3895	4.6732	0.4157	1.4187		
SWITZERLAND FRANC	8.2216	1.5519	1.5843	15.4384	15.1198	1.5985	19.1742	1.7057	5.6200		
AUSTRIA SCHILLING	1.5773	0.3166	0.3232	3.1495	3.0843	0.3281	3.9117	0.3480	1.1873		
CANADA DOLLAR	2.7621	0.5214	0.5323	5.1868	5.0792	0.5370	6.4418	0.5730	1.9550		
EURO	11.2181	2.1171	2.1614	21.0614	20.6254	2.1807	26.1578	2.3269	7.9410		
ITALY LIRA	24.2887	4.8810	4.9767	48.5715	47.8291	4.7195	58.5998	6.2563	17.1926		
SPAIN PESA	50.5811	9.5439	9.7434	94.8428	92.9774	9.8304	117.9170	10.4804	35.7972		
NETHERLANDS GILDER	4.0830	0.7616	0.7717	7.3785	7.4216	0.7847	9.4123	0.8573	2.8574		
FRANCE FRANC	2.7401	0.5172	0.5280	5.1463	5.0388	0.5327	6.3904	0.5685	1.9400		
AUSTRIA SCHILLING	17.2468	3.2555	3.3236	32.3858	31.7154	3.3532	40.2225	3.6780	12.2108		
CANADA DOLLAR	2.1107	0.3984	0.4068	3.9635	3.8815	0.4104	4.9226	0.4379	1.4944		
EURO	1.2534	0.2366	0.2415	2.3536	2.3048	0.2437	2.9231	0.2600	0.8874		

	US DOLLAR	GERMAN MARK	FRANCE FRANC	UK POUND	ITALY LIRA	SPAIN PESA	NETHERLANDS GILDER	SWITZERLAND FRANC	AUSTRIA SCHILLING	CANADA DOLLAR	EURO
US DOLLAR	1.0000	1.8565	0.5762	0.7048	0.1718	0.9421	0.5114	6.8300	1.1289		
GERMAN MARK	0.6111	1.0000	0.3321	0.4307	0.1020	0.5146	0.3125	3.5563	0.6896		
FRANCE FRANC	1.7398	2.9403	1.0000	1.2234	0.2982	1.4915	0.6375	10.1010	1.9558		
UK POUND	1.4187	2.3217	0.8174	1.0000	0.2437	1.1947	0.7255	8.2568	1.6987		
ITALY LIRA	5.8209	9.5259	3.3530	4.1030	1.0000	4.9018	2.9766	33.8774	6.5980		
SPAIN PESA	118.7500	194.3344	68.4208	83.7084	20.4008	1.0000	60.7246	891.1194	133.8194		
NETHERLANDS GILDER	1.9556	3.2003	1.1267	1.3794	0.3360	1.8466	1.0000	11.3151	2.2037		
SWITZERLAND FRANC	1.9410	12.9954	4.5754	5.5874	1.3642	6.8672	4.0397	45.2162	8.3493		
AUSTRIA SCHILLING	17.1122	28.1185	9.9390	12.1113	2.9518	14.4883	8.7884	1.0000	19.3627		
CANADA DOLLAR	35.7872	58.5822	20.6255	25.2324	6.1488	30.1450	18.3954	208.3382	40.3309		
EURO	1.5881	2.5683	0.9035	1.1053	0.2884	1.3005	0.8019	8.1265	1.7671		
NETHERLANDS GILDER	2.8574	4.6761	1.6484	2.0141	0.4899	2.4092	1.4612	16.8209	3.2200		
FRANCE FRANC	1.9400	3.1746	1.1176	1.3674	0.3333	1.6337	0.9820	11.2607	2.1862		
AUSTRIA SCHILLING	12.2108	19.9629	7.0395	8.6070	2.0877	10.2827	6.2442	71.0880	13.7803		
CANADA DOLLAR	1.4944	2.4466	0.8610	1.0534	0.2567	1.2584	0.7642	8.8973	1.8840		
EURO	0.8874	1.4522	0.5113	0.6255	0.1524	0.7473	0.4538	5.1646	1.0000		

MAJOR CURRENCIES AGAINST JORDAN DINAR

	US DOLLAR	GERMAN MARK	FRANCE FRANC	UK POUND	ITALY LIRA	SPAIN PESA	NETHERLANDS GILDER	SWITZERLAND FRANC	AUSTRIA SCHILLING	CANADA DOLLAR	EURO
US DOLLAR	1.0000	1.8565	0.5762	0.7048	0.1718	0.9421	0.5114	6.8300	1.1289		
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SPAIN PESA	118.7500	194.3344	68.4208	83.7084	20.4008	1.0000	60.7246	891.1194	133.8194		
NETHERLANDS GILDER	1.9556	3.2003	1.1267	1.3794	0.3360	1.8466	1.0000	11.3151	2.2037		
SWITZERLAND FRANC	1.9410	12.9954	4.5754	5.5874	1.3642	6.8672	4.0397	45.2162	8.3493		
AUSTRIA SCHILLING	17.1122	28.1185	9.9390	12.1113	2.9518	14.4883	8.7884	1.0000	19.3627		
CANADA DOLLAR	35.7872	58.5822	20.6255	25.2324	6.1488	30.1450	18.3954	208.3382	40.3309		
EURO	1.5881	2.5683	0.9035	1.1053	0.2884	1.3005	0.8019	8.1265	1.7671		
NETHERLANDS GILDER	2.8574	4.6761	1.6484	2.0141	0.4899	2.4092	1.4612	16.8209	3.2200		
FRANCE FRANC	1.9400	3.1746	1.1176	1.3674	0.3333	1.6337	0.9820	11.2607	2.1862		
AUSTRIA SCHILLING	12.2108	19.9629	7.0395	8.6070	2.0877	10.2827	6.2442	71.0880	13.7803		
CANADA DOLLAR	1.4944	2.4466	0.8610	1.0534	0.2567	1.2584	0.7642	8.8973	1.8840		
EURO	0.8874	1.4522	0.5113	0.6255	0.1524	0.7473	0.4538	5.1646	1.0000		

WORLD STOCK MARKETS

					PRECIOUS METALS		
		CLOSE					
FRANKFURT	DAX	4910.09	4904.08	-64.59	METAL	ASK	BID
HONG KONG	HANG SENG	9402.39	9402.39	0.00	GOLD	285.60	286.10
LONDON	FT-100	6078.40	6108.00	+30.20	SILVER	5.46	5.40
NEW YORK	DJ INDUS	9196.47	9207.03	+101.50	PLATINUM	395.00	396.00
NEW YORK	NYSE COMPOSITE	560.35	568.73	+8.38			
NEW YORK	AMEX COMPOSITE	588.85	595.84	+6.99			
NEW YORK	S&P 500	1222.03	1230.19	+8.16			
PARIS	CAC 40	3885.40	3885.40	0.00			
FRANKFURT	COMMERZBANK	4691.20	4691.20	0.00			

THE Daily Crossword

Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

ACROSS

AFM trading, share prices expected to continue rising

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN — The general price index and the trading volume rose by 1.8 per cent and 44.5 per cent respectively at the Amman Financial Market (AFM) last week following positive indications about the performance of some banks and industrial firms during 1998, brokers said Friday.

The AFM weekly report showed that the 60-share general price index closed at 181.45 points compared to 178.12 points in the previous week, a 3.33 points increase.

Naim Nageeb, a broker at the stock market, said trading volume amounted to JD12 million during the five-day trading in the past week compared to JD2.1 million in the previous week, when trading days were restricted to two days following the death of His Majesty King Hussein.

The seven-page report showed the industrial sector ranked first with a turnover amounting to JD7 million, or 58.3 per cent of the total trading volume.

Jordan Phosphate Mines Company recorded 14 per cent of the volume followed

by the Arab Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Company with 12.7 per cent and the International Tobacco and Cigarettes Company for 8.1 per cent.

The banking sector ranked second with a trading volume of JD2.7 million, where the Housing and Arab banks registered 17.6 per cent of the total volume.

The bulletin showed that share prices of the 13 banks that were traded on the floor recorded increase.

The services sector ranked third with JD2.3 million of the total volume, or 19.1 per cent.

Trading focused on the Jordan Electric Power and the Jordan Press Foundation, Al Rai.

Nageeb expected the stock market will maintain this rhythm this week and predicted trading will focus on shares of companies that have recorded "good" results in the past year, mostly in the banking and industrial sectors.

Parallel market won 10.1 per cent of the trading volume, which amounted to JD1.2 million. The bulk of this volume were recorded by the United Arab Investors and the Century Investment and the Al Ekhal Investment which amounted to JD677,986.

Share prices of 61 firms rose during last week trading. 12 firms recorded decline in their share prices while eight firms registered no changes in their share prices.

Jordanian industrialists meet Iraq's trade minister today to discuss boosting exports

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN — Iraqi Trade Minister Mohammad Mehdi Saleh is expected to start discussions here today with Jordanian industrialists on the Kingdom's exports to his country, amid indications that the trade volume with Baghdad declined in 1998.

A statement from the Amman Chamber of Industry said the meeting with the Iraqi official will focus on the obstacles that impede the flow of goods to the sanctions-hit country and how to increase exports to Iraq.

It quoted the chairman of the chamber, Khaldoun Abu Hassan, as saying that the industrialists are looking forward to increase the trade volume with Iraq, which declined from JD255 million in 1996 to almost JD190 million this year following a drop in global oil prices.

During a meeting between the industrialists and the chamber's council on Wednesday, participants proposed an expansion of the list of goods allowed to be exported to Baghdad.

Following the 1990-91 Gulf War, Iraq signed a trade proto-

col with Jordan, which is usually reviewed and renewed by the two countries on an annual basis.

A study by the Amman Chamber of Industry showed that Jordanian exports to Iraq declined by 18 per cent in the past year compared to 1997 figures.

The study, which was made available to the Jordan Times, indicated that Jordanian exports to Iraq amounted to JD104 million in the first nine months of 1998. It said the decline was due to the "reduction of the Jordanian-Iraqi trade protocol" and the decline of

Jordan's foreign exports in general in 1998.

But despite the decline, Iraq ranked first among the Arab markets importing Jordanian-made products, the eight-page study said.

The Kingdom's exports to Iraq amounted to 22.8 per cent of its exports to Arab countries in the first nine months of 1998 compared to 25.6 per cent in the same period of 1997. Jordan's total exports to Arab states in the past year amounted to JD456.7 million.

The study said the Kingdom's oil imports from Iraq in the first seven months of

1998 amounted to JD115.1 million compared to JD291 million in 1997.

The study indicated that exports to Iraq reached a peak in 1995 and called for increasing the trade protocol to \$800 million.

It indicated that the Kingdom's share of exports to Iraq in line with the oil-food agreement Baghdad signed with the U.N. increased in 1998.

It showed that Jordanian industrialists won contracts worth JD138 million in 1998 compared to JD96 million in the previous year; a 44 per cent

increase. The bulk of Jordanian exports were vegetable oil, soaps, medicine and medical supplies and detergents.

The study proposed an increase in the number of products that Jordan can export to Iraq and noted that industrialists were ready to rehabilitate Iraqi factories damaged by the U.S.-led attacks against Iraq in the past eight years.

The oil-for-food deal, which was reached in December 1996, stipulates that Iraq can sell \$2 billion worth of oil in exchange for humanitarian purchases.

AFM FROM 99-02-13 TO 99-02-17

ACCESS 4646868

COMPANY	OPEN	CLOSE	CHANGE
PRICE	PRICE		
BANKS			
ARAB BK	214.500	215.000	+0.23%
NTL BK	1.490	1.560	+4.03%
BK OF JORDAN	1.250	1.360	+8.80%
MIDDLE EAST BK	0.970	0.980	+1.03%
INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK	1.460	1.510	+3.42%
THE HOUSING BK	2.780	2.890	+4.71%
JO. KUWAIT BK	1.670	1.690	+1.20%
JO. GULF BK	0.670	0.700	+4.48%
JO. ISLAMIC BK	1.670	1.790	+7.18%
UNION BK	0.980	1.000	+2.04%
JO. INVEST. & FIN. BK	1.290	1.360	+5.43%
ARAB BNG COR	2.500	2.630	+5.20%
PHILADELPHIA BK	0.510	0.550	+7.84%
BANK INDEX	293.570	POINT =	+1.22%
INSURANCE			
JO. FRENCH INS	2.790	2.830	+1.43%
JO. GULF INS	1.860	1.680	-9.68%
INSURANCE INDEX	124.600	POINT =	-0.72%
SERVICES			
ELECTRIC POWER	1.700	1.770	+4.12%
IRBID ELECTRICITY	1.790	1.700	-5.03%
PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	0.780	0.810	+3.85%
REAL ESTATE	1.100	1.060	-3.64%
JO. INTL. TRADING CEN	0.260	0.260	0.00%
AL-RAT	6.450	7.250	+12.40%
AD-DUSTOR	6.290	5.980	-4.93%
AL-ZARQA FOR EDU	0.890	0.890	0.00%
ARAB INTL. FOR INVS.	1.940	2.000	+3.09%
UNIFIED LAND TRANS	1.160	1.190	+2.58%
UNITED FOR FINANCIA	1.080	1.060	-0.95%
SERVICES INDEX	115.820	POINT =	+2.81%
INDUSTRY			
CEMENT	3.680	3.650	-0.82%
PHOSPHATE	2.350	2.370	+0.85%
ARAB POTASH	3.850	4.150	+7.79%
PETROLEUM REFINER	10.730	10.850	+1.12%
THE IND. CORP. & AGRI	1.090	1.110	+1.83%
WAGHAT MILLS	5.550	5.850	+5.40%
ARAB PHARMACEUTI	3.130	3.170	+1.28%
CERAMIC IND	1.290	1.360	+5.39%
TOBACCO & CIGARET	1.340	1.540	+14.93%
JO. PIPES	1.100	1.140	+3.64%
UNIVERSAL CHEMICAL	0.970	1.000	+3.09%
NTL CABLE	0.620	0.650	+4.84%
SULPHO - CHEMICALS	0.380	0.480	+26.32%
ARAB CENTER FOR PH	1.330	1.340	+0.75%
KAWTHER	0.370	0.370	0.00%
EL-ZAY	1.310	1.310	0.00%
UNIVERSAL MODERN I	0.670	0.650	-2.99%
IND. RESOURCES	0.480	0.450	-6.25%
NEW CAPLES	0.810	0.620	-23.46%
NTL ALUMINIUM	0.710	0.790	+11.27%
INDUSTRY INDEX	96.520	POINT =	+3.45%

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 1999

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) This should be a good day to fall in love. A person who fits your picture could come out of nowhere. Here's a word of caution, however: The pictures are not all there is. It's more important to fall in love with somebody who'll turn out to be a good friend, so don't be side-tracked by appearances.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You might wake up with a headache this morning, but it'll ease as the day continues. The moon's going into your sign, and that's wonderful. With the sun in Pisces there will be a calming, healing feeling about the day. It's a marvellous weekend for classical music, beautiful gardens and snuggling with someone you love.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) A meeting with friends could turn out very well and produce lots of great new ideas. If travel is among them, however, take care. Anticipate delays and other inconveniences, and do your best if they occur. If you don't have to go right now, your best bet is to stay put, at least until after rush hour.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 22) Remember to be respectful again today, especially to a person who seems to be trying to get you upset. You like things to be nice, and maybe even a bit genteel, but you might feel like you've invited Tiger to a tea party. Don't despair. You could have a lot of fun in a situation like that. Just don't bring out your good china.

LEO: (July 23 to August 23) Your plans for today may have to be changed due to unforeseen circumstances. Well, you might be able to foresee them, if you're careful. Although you have a tendency to be impetuous, right now that wouldn't be wise. The thing most likely to get you are predictable, but not obvious.

VIRGO: (August 23 to September 22) Make sure that cheque is in the mail before you take off on Saturday. You never forget things like that, unless, of course, it happens to be a cheque you're writing to yourself. Virgos quite often manage this sort of account for other people. Today, make sure that you take care of yourself.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 23) Self-discipline is required today, especially if you're going shopping. If you keep that in mind, you'll probably do fine. Even if you spot some good bargains early today, looks like you'll find some even better ones later. Buy the old things early and the new things in the afternoon.

SCORPIO: (October 24 to November 21) You're still raring to go this morning, but by this afternoon and evening you may have worn down a little. You'll be tired by then, most likely, and ready to let somebody else carry part of the load. Luckily for you, it looks like somebody else is eager to do just that.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You should be in a good mood today for household projects. Your energy level is high, your attitude is excellent and you're feeling extremely creative. You'll be doing these jobs not because you have to, but because you want to, and that makes all the difference in the world.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 19) This weekend's going to be excellent for entertaining friends and family. It's especially good for entertaining that one person you'd like to get to know better, in the privacy of your own home. If you're going to ask that one over, don't bother to invite all the rest. They'll get over it.

AQUARIUS: (January 20 to February 18) Bad news. One of your brilliant ideas isn't going to work today. Good news. You have lots more where that came from, a never-ending supply, in fact, and a little bit of frustration just whets your appetite. Get back to the textbooks and find the answer to this newest puzzle that's got you baffled.

PISCES: (February 19 to March 20) That Taurus moon helps you concentrate and think more clearly. It also helps you be practical, hard working, thrifty and sensual. Those are all the main things that Taurus is good for, so you can pick from that list, or add the ones you've discovered on your own, as you make your plans for this weekend.

Birthstone of February: Amethyst — Onyx

The family of the late Nagib Sahyoun, founder and former president of REFCO - The Real Estate Financing Corporation in Amman,

is deeply saddened and moved

by the passing of

His Majesty King Hussein

and conveys to

His Majesty King Abdullah II,

to Her Majesty Queen Noor and to all the members of the Hashemite family their sincere condolences and deep sorrow for

the great loss of our beloved King Hussein.

May God the Almighty rest his soul in peace.

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Myllylae wins 30k in opening event of nordic worlds

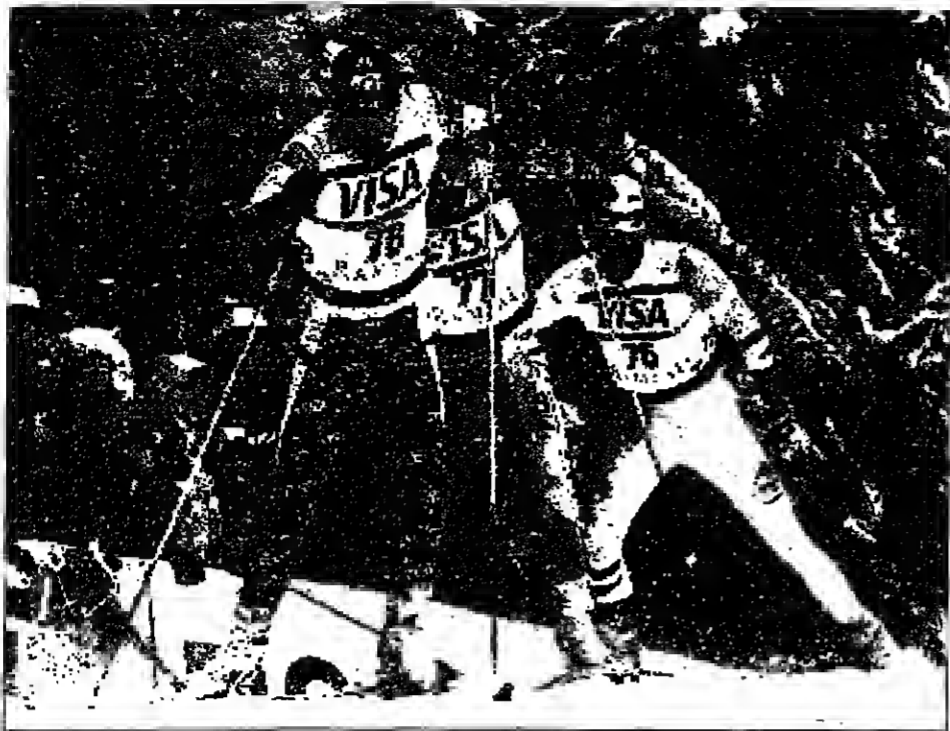
RAMSAU, Austria (AP) — Mika Myllylae of Finland, the Olympic champion who thrives in difficult conditions, powered through a snow storm to win the men's 30-kilometre freestyle race Friday and capture the first gold medal of the Nordic Ski World Championship.

Myllylae, 29, set a punishing pace from the start and led at all intermediate timing stations.

"The conditions were perfect for me," Myllylae said. "But never, ever in my dreams did I think I would win today." He kept increasing his lead throughout the race and won in one hour, 15 minutes, 26.2 seconds, 35.3 seconds ahead of Thomas Alsgaard of Norway.

Norwegian superstar Bjorn Daehlie, the most successful cross-country skier in history, struggled over the last few kilometres and had to settle for the bronze medal, 7.2 seconds behind Alsgaard, who overtook his teammate late in the race.

Fulvio Valbusa of Italy, who had spent part of the race behind Myllylae and at one point was ahead of Daehlie, faded in the late stages and finished fourth. But Daehlie was unable to



Mika Myllylae (L) of Finland is on his way to win the men's 30 km Cross Country event at the World Nordic Skiing Championships Feb. 19. Myllylae won the race in a time of one hour 15 minutes 26.2 seconds ahead of the Norwegians Thomas Alsgaard and Bjorn Daehlie. Pictured right to Myllylae are fourth placed Fulvio Valbusa of Italy and Anders Bergstrom of Sweden (Reuters photo).

take advantage of Valbusa's problems and instead of moving to second place, allowed Alsgaard to break through. Daehlie's training was set back last week by an inflammation of the vocal cords. While winning vir-

tually everything else, Daehlie has struggled over the 30k in recent years and has not won a major title in the event since the 1993 worlds.

"I was ok until the 15th kilometre but then Thomas attacked from behind and I

lost the second place," Daehlie said.

Alsgaard said Myllylae was unbeatable Friday. "nobody could catch Mika today," Myllylae crossed the line waving a Finnish flag and threw off his cap in celebration.

He won the Olympic title last year in Nagano in a snow storm and the 50k world title in 1997 in Trondheim, Norway, in pouring rain.

The snow never let up during the race Friday but the it didn't seem to bother Myllylae.

"I have been training here for many years and this is like a home village for me," Myllylae said.

The Finn said he had been hesitating a long time before deciding whether to race the 30k at all.

"My best is the 50k. But I won a 10k event in seefeld last weekend and then I saw that I had to race the 30k here," he said.

For Daehlie, the 30k remains a jinxed event. He finished a disappointing 20th at the Nagano Olympics after choosing the wrong wax. He was second in the 1995 and 1997 Worlds, and second at the 1992 and 1994 Olympics.

Still, he remains on course to medal on all five events here.

In his sixth world championship, Daehlie now has a total of 16 medals, only one behind the record of Elena Vaele, the retired Russian star.

Courier trying to boost confidence

MEMPHIS, Tennessee (AP) — Jim Courier isn't ready to quit tennis just yet, and he has his sights set on rejoining the top ranks.

Courier took a step in that direction Thursday night when he followed an upset of fourth-seeded Michael Chang in the second round by beating Laurence Tielemans 6-7 (7-5), 7-5, 6-1 to advance to today's quarter-finals at the \$700,000 St. Jude Indoor tournament.

It was Courier's best performance this year after injuring a groin during the Australian Open.

"You have to build your home one brick at a time," said Courier, a former No. 1 who is currently ranked 69th in the world. "I don't think it would be very difficult for me to go from not playing well, not playing well, then out of the blue win a (grand) slam."

Courier has 23 career titles, including four Grand Slam victories. But he has struggled in recent years with injuries and got into this tournament, sponsored by Kroger, with a wild card.

Top-seeded Todd Martin said he isn't counting Courier out on his comeback attempt. "Jim puts a lot of stress on

doing his job well," he said.

Courier said he understands that he can't just turn his game on and off and that he needs to try and play well for several weeks at a time.

"I guess the crux of what I'm trying to get at here is I need to build match upon match to build my confidence and also instill some fear in the locker room," Courier nearly lost his momentum against Tielemans. He blew a 3-1 lead in the first set as the Italian broke him twice to win the set.

But Courier broke Tielemans in the 12th game of the second set to avoid another tiebreaker, and the American took control in the third with a 4-0 lead.

"We were in a bit of a dog-fight until I broke it out in the third set," Courier said.

He was scheduled to meet sixth-seeded Mariano Puerta for the first time in the quarter-finals today. Puerta defeated Richey Reneberg 4-6, 6-3, 6-4.

In other action Thursday, Martin beat Kenneth Carlsen 7-6 (7-3), 6-2 and advanced to meet Jan Michael Gambill, a 6-3, 7-6 (8-6) winner over Scott Draper. No. 3 Tommy Haas downed 13th-seeded

Ramon Delgado 7-6 (7-2), 6-4 and next meets 12th-seeded Andrei Ilie, who beat Jiri Novak 6-4, 4-6, 6-4.

John Van Lottum stopped Todd Woodbridge 6-4, 6-4 and next meets unseeded Daniel Nestor, a 1-6, 6-3, 7-6 (12-10) winner over Mark Philippoussis.

Nestor ended Philippoussis' chances of defending his title here and of winning for a second straight week on the tour by nearly matching the Australian ace for ace.

Philippoussis, last week's champion at the Sybase Open, came in ranked 14th in the world, seeded No. 2 and riding a 9-1 match streak. The Australian started quickly, only to stumble in the second set.

In the third set, Philippoussis couldn't regain his momentum against nestor, ranked 104th. He had match point in the tiebreaker at 6-5, only to double-fault.

"It's extremely disappointing," Philippoussis said. "I had my chances there. I just didn't take them. I felt fresh, and I'm very disappointed. I'm going to go home very upset."

NBA Round-up



New York Knicks' defender Marcus Camby falls to the floor after being run down by Cleveland Cavaliers' Derek Anderson during the third quarter in Cleveland on Feb. 18. The Cavaliers beat the Knicks 98-74 (AFP photo).

Rockets edge Nets; Cavaliers rout Knicks

EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey (AP) — Scottie Pippen hit a free throw with 3.3 seconds left in overtime and the Houston Rockets got the benefit of two late calls in beating the New Jersey

Nets 93-92 on Thursday night.

Pippen's game-winning free throw capped a 26-point performance.

The Nets thought they had taken a 94-92 lead with 6.6 seconds left when Jayson Williams put in the rebound off Kerry Kittles' miss. However, referee Scott Foster waved off the basket for

offensive interference, ruling the ball was still on the cylinder when the Nets centre touched it.

Seconds later, Houston's Hakeem Olajuwon made a bad pass to a falling Pippen, but referee Marc Davis ruled Scott Burrell tripped Pippen as he was backing up. Pippen made the first free throw and missed the second.



The New Jersey Nets' Jayson Williams (L), Houston Rockets' Hakeem Olajuwon (C), Nets' Chris Gatling (Zod R) and the Rockets' Michael Dickerson battle for a loose ball under the basket in the first quarter at Cootenfield Airlines Arena in East Rutherford, N.J. (AFP photo).

Olajuwon, who had 21 points and a season-high 15 rebounds, forced the overtime, hitting a line-drive shot from the top of the key with 4.4 seconds left to tie it at 85. Kendall Gill led the Nets with 24 points.

Cavaliers 98, Knicks 74

In Cleveland, Shawn Kemp scored 20 points and Vitaly Potapenko had 17 points and 12 rebounds as Cleveland, playing its first game since learning Zydrunas Ilgauskas would miss the rest of the season, embarrassed New York.

On Wednesday, tests revealed that the 7-foot-3 Ilgauskas fractured a small bone in his left foot. With Potapenko starting at centre, the Cavs out-worked the Knicks all over the floor but especially in the paint, finishing with a surprising 42-37 rebounding advantage.

Wesley Person added 14 points, Cedric Henderson

13 and Brevin Knight 11 assists as the Cavs won their fourth straight game after opening 0-3. Patrick Ewing had 14 points and Allan Houston 12 for New York, which had its four-game winning streak stopped.

Pacers 99, 76ers 95

In Indianapolis, Antonio Davis scored 16 points and Reggie Miller added 15 as Indiana beat Philadelphia, the pacers' 10th straight victory over the 76ers and 15th in their last 16 meetings.

Sam Perkins had seven of his 11 points in the fourth quarter. He made a layup and his first 3-pointer of the season to start the final period and ignite a 13-6 run in the first four minutes, giving Indiana a 79-70 lead.

Alan Iverson led the 76ers with 33 points and Matt Geiger had 22.

Wizards 95, Raptors 88

In Toronto, Mitch Richmond scored 31 points and Rod Strickland had 23 points and 14 assists in Washington's victory over Toronto.

Washington's two victories this season have come against the Raptors, who have lost five straight after beating Boston in their season opener.

Kevin Willis led the Raptors with 25 points and 14 rebounds.

Jazz 97, Nuggets 86

In Salt Lake City, Bryon Russell had 21 points and Jeff Hornacek added 19 as Utah matched its best start in franchise history.

The Jazz, who have beaten Denver nine straight times, are 7-1 to equal their 1989-90 start. The Nuggets lost their fourth straight game to fall to 1-8, the second-worst mark in the league.

Nick Van Exel had 19 points and eight assists for Denver.

Star's father latest victim in Mexico kidnapping wave

ACAPULCO, Mexico (AP) — The victim was extraordinary, but the crime was frighteningly ordinary.

The kidnapping of the father of soccer star Jorge Campos was stunning because it struck the family of one of the country's most famous athletes.

Campos, goalkeeper of the national team in the 1994 and 1998 World Cup tournaments, is a stylish, popular figure and a fixture in television commercials.

But the crime itself was commonplace. Kidnappers in Mexico have terrorised shopkeepers, farmers, bankers and entertainers.

The crimes have been blamed on common criminals, guerrilla bands and even police.

"It's just another kidnapping, but it happens to involve somebody famous," said Hector Garcia, a businessman in Mexico City. "There are lots of kidnappings every day, but nobody seems to care anymore." Alvaro Campos, 65, was seized Wednesday by eight men brandishing assault rifles at a sports field named for his son outside the resort city of Acapulco.

Alvaro Campos, known to friends as "El Nono," or "the grandpa," is well-liked and known for promoting local soccer.

He also recorded television commercials for the governing institutional revolutionary party before this month's state election.

"El Nono" told all of U.S. his family and his friends, that he had received some phone calls since December in which they threatened to kidnap him, but he said those were jokes," said Ricardo Jimenez Anaya, a friend of the elder Campos.

Jorge Campos flew home to Mexico on Thursday from Hong Kong, where he was in a tournament with Mexico's national soccer team.

Mexican news media reported that he met with officials from the attorney general's office shortly after his arrival.

"I insist that the main thing in this case is that they respect the life of my father," he was quoted Thursday as telling the sports daily Opciones.

Campos has a contract with major league soccer to play for the Chicago Fire, but the team let him return to Mexico for the season to compete with a top division team, Unam Pumas.

The Fire, which acquired him from the Los Angeles Galaxy a year ago, expect him back in the spring.

"Our thoughts and concerns are with Jorge and his family."

We're very upset to hear about what happened, and we hope Alvaro is returned safely," Chicago Fire spokesman Adam Low said.

Police in Acapulco said they couldn't comment on the case until the family filed a complaint.

Acapulco, one of Mexico's most famed beach resorts, is a part of Guerrero State, which has been plagued by abductions.

New York native Vincent Carroza, manager of Acapulco's Princess Hotel, was held for eight days in December 1997.

Businessman Melchor Perusquia was found murdered in march 1996 after his family paid a ransom reported at \$390,000.

Vicente Fernandez, a ranchero-style singer, had to pay a reported \$3.2 million in September to win the release of a son, who had two fingers cut off by kidnappers during a four-month captivity in northern Mexico.

Mexico's most-wanted kidnapper, Daniel Arizmendi, known for cutting off victims' ears, was captured in August. But kidnappings have not abated.

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MERCURY RISING Shows: 10:30, 8:30, 6:15, 3:30, 12:30	ALWAD MAHROUS TBA' AL WAZIR Shows: 10:30, 8:30, 6:15, 3:30, 12:30	AL ZA'EEM Shows: 12:15, 3:15, 6:30, 9:45	THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	LETHAL WEAPON 4 MULAN Shows: 3:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30			
			CONCORDE "2" Sleepwalkers Shows: 3:30, 5:30 only				

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One Olympic executive is retained, another remains under investigation

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Of the two Salt Lake City Olympic officials put on leave during the investigation of the bribery scandal, one will keep his job and the other will remain on leave pending further evaluation.

Mitt Romney, the new president of the Salt Lake Organising Committee (SLOC), decided late Thursday that Kelly Flint, senior vice president of marketing and legal affairs, will retain his job.

Licensing director Rod Hamson will remain on paid leave pending further evaluation in the next 30 days, spokesman Caroline Shaw said.

Flint and Hamson declined to comment.

An independent ethics panel last week blamed Tom Welch, former head of the bid committee, and David Johnson, senior vice president, for spending more than \$1 million in cash, free vacations, living stipends, gifts and free medical care on International Olympic Committee (IOC) members and their families prior to the 1993 IOC vote that awarded Salt Lake the 2002 winter games.

Flint and Hamson have been on paid leave since Jan. 8, when SLOC President Frank Joklik and Johnson resigned. Joklik remains on the SLOC board of trustees.

Flint and Hamson were not responsible for the excesses, but Flint signed some checks and Hamson prepared vouchers for checks that allowed relatives of IOC members to attend American universities or simply to live in the U.S., the ethics panel reported.

The compensation committee on

Wednesday unanimously recommended that Flint return to the SLOC, but the final decision was left to Romney.

When he accepted the job last week, Romney said he would raise the ethical bar and require all employees and trustees to sign a code of ethics. And he asked trustees who "cast a shadow on the games, even where no wrong may have been done," to resign.

Flint was the second signatory on a number of checks to IOC member relatives, but he told the ethics panel he thought the checks were authorised under a scholarship programme.

He also told the ethics panel that he had no way of knowing that the names on the checks belonged to relatives of IOC members.

Among the IOC relatives who benefited from checks Flint signed was Sibo Sibandze, the son of David Sibandze of Swaziland, who resigned from the IOC amid the scandal last month.

Ultimately, Sibo Sibandze got more than \$111,000 from the bid committee.

While Flint attended meetings of the bid board and its executive committee and wrote the minutes, he was not involved in the day-to-day operations and played no significant role in entertaining IOC members, the ethics panel report said.

The report described hamson as a fresh college graduate who was given the title of finance director, but who had no leadership role.

Hamson schmoozed with IOC members and simply did what he was told by Welch and Johnson, the report said. That included filling out

vouchers for checks showing documentation that did not exist.

"In this regard he was not unlike other bid committee employees who were aware of educational grants to IOC relatives and had suspicions about direct payments," the report said.

In other Olympic developments: — the Utah House of Representatives voted 70-0 to hold SLOC's board to its promise of conducting business in public with open meetings and records. The bill, which now goes to the Senate, would require as a condition for using taxpayer-funded sports venues that the Olympic organisation open many of its records to anyone who asks for them.

Rep. Dave Jones, D-Salt Lake City, said few people could tell what was going on during the bidding. "We looked at budgets, but we didn't see a line item for 'bribery,'" Jones said. "We looked at audits, but we didn't see any mention of super bowl trips or scholarship funds. We simply didn't have access to the information we needed." — the Utah House also moved to lift a sales tax diversion that paid for \$59 million worth of Olympic sports venues. The money was raised and a hole in the state budget, a speed-skating oval and an ice rink built. The state began dedicating a tiny fraction of the sales tax—equal to 3 cents on a \$100 purchase—in 1989.

House members voted unanimously to repeal the tax diversion, sending the bill to the Senate.

— U.S. Rep. Chris Cannon, R-Utah, said the scandal was unlikely to jeopardise \$90 million in

promised federal funding for Olympic-related highway improvements. Cannon told Utah legislators Thursday that Congress will follow through on the funding even as its accounting arm, the general accounting office, inquires about the use of federal money already spent on the Olympic effort.

— A former ski official said Salt Lake City "robbed" U.S.

winter sports athletes of \$3 million in unkept promises made in its bid for the winter Olympics. Howard Peterson, who stepped down as executive director of the U.S. Skiing Association in 1994, called for Utah authorities to pay the money now to help get American athletes ready for 2002. The U.S. Olympic Committee said that a check of Salt Lake's bid documents found no specific mention of the programme referred to by Peterson.

— Swedish officials said an IOC member expelled in the bribery scandal, Zein Al Abidin Ahmed Abdel Gadir of Sudan, was consistently drunk as he checked out Stockholm's bid for the 2004 games and got so offensive that he was thrown out of a dinner party. Gadir was one of two IOC members whose behaviour was questioned by Stockholm bid leaders in a letter to the IOC.

The letter, from bid officials Goeran Laangsvad and Olof Stenhammar, said none of the members who visited Stockholm violated IOC guidelines, but singled out Gadir and Lamine Keita of Mali for "behaviour ... not up to expectations." Gadir and Keita were ousted from the IOC last month after being

Chelsea aim to end lean spell at forest

LONDON (R) — Chelsea visit lowly Nottingham Forest on Saturday anxious to make up ground on English Premier League Leaders Manchester United.

The clash looks very one-sided in theory as Chelsea sit just four points off the top with a game in hand and Forest are four points adrift of Southampton at the bottom.

But Nottingham Forest has not proved a happy hunting ground for the London side who have won only one of eight league visits, back in 1994.

Chelsea's chase for the title is not being helped by their worsening disciplinary record.

Gianluca Vialli marred his anniversary as Chelsea player-manager when he was sent off against Blackburn Rovers in midweek.

He now faces a three-match ban, leaving Gianfranco Zola as their

only established striker because Tore Andre Flo and Pierluigi Casiraghi are out injured.

"Now the season gets really tough," Vialli admitted. "We have so many players out...it does not help at all." Manchester United travel to 17th-placed Coventry who are still licking their wounds after a 4-1 midweek thumping by Newcastle United.

United have won five of their six premier league visits to Highfield road and the Andy Cole-Dwight Yorke golden partnership suggests more misery is in store.

The United strikers continue to prosper. Cole's goal against Arsenal on Wednesday brought their combined total for the season to 40.

United manager Alex Ferguson is confident his side can hold off all challengers.

"We are stronger than we were at this stage last year,"

he said. "We have more quality in depth in our squad which not only provides cover for injuries but introduces competition for places which keeps everyone on their toes." Champions Arsenal host Leicester City, with the visitors on a high after securing a league cup final spot on Wednesday.

They are unlikely to take much away from Highbury, though — it has been 26 years since Leicester have won a league game there.

Fourth-placed Aston Villa, faltering on a run of three consecutive defeats, must wait until Sunday for their visit to Wimbledon.

Leeds United, fifth, welcome Everton who have not won at Elland Road since 1951. They have tried in vain 32 times since and with Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink looking on scoring form, it looks like the sequence will increase.

Bordeaux playmaker Bernabie suspended

PARIS (R) — French league leaders Girondins Bordeaux playmaker Ali Bernabie has been banned for two months for deliberately stamping on a linesman's feet.

Bernabie, who attended a French Football Federation disciplinary commission on Thursday, stamped on the linesman's feet at the end of a league match at Rennes 10 days ago.

The fiery midfielder was sent off from the Bordeaux substitutes' bench for disputing a free-kick awarded to Rennes five minutes from time.

Rennes equalised thanks to the free-kick and the game ended a 1-1 draw.

"I apologised to the linesman and to the

officials. And I told them I accepted the ban. Of course I reacted badly but nobody was injured. I didn't hit the linesman," Bernabie said.

Girondins vice-president Jean-Didier Lange said they will lodge an appeal against Bernabie's two-month suspension.

Bernabie is likely to miss five of the last ten league games and should be back at Sochaux on April 24.

Girondins coach Elie Baup, also sent off that night, said the punishment will mar the end of the championship.

"There are ten matches to go and a two-month ban is very severe," Baup said. "Everybody knows that Bernabie is our key player."

Blatter to meet UEFA chiefs over biennial World Cup plan

GENEVA (R) — FIFA president Sepp Blatter will meet European soccer chiefs next week to discuss his suggestion to hold the World Cup every two years. UEFA, European soccer's governing body, said in a statement on Friday that Blatter would attend a meeting of its executive committee in

Geneva next Wednesday. UEFA has so far been forthright in its rejection of the idea. The executive committee last month passed a resolution saying it "had no positive elements for European football nor football in general nor the World Cup". Friday's statement said Blatter

would be "asked to provide more details of the proposal he launched via the media at the beginning of the year". UEFA bosses have made clear their annoyance that Blatter went public with the idea before consulting them.

Fiorentina can win minus Batistuta

ROME (R) — Fiorentina head into Sunday's Serie A clash with as Roma filled with new belief that there is life without injured Argentine captain Gabriel Batistuta.

With Portuguese midfielder Rui Costa producing his best form of the season, the Fiorentina side gained a vital 2-0 win at Bologna in their Italian Cup semifinal first leg on Thursday.

Batistuta's stand-in Carmine Esposito even made-up for the top man's absence with a 33rd minute goal straight out of the Argentine's repertoire — a first-time 20-metre shot into the top corner.

The victory was a timely boost for a team who have lost both an inspirational striker for six weeks with a twisted knee and the league leadership.

Fiorentina are level on points with Lazio at the top but trail on goal difference. They must beat Roma at the Artemio Franchi Stadium on Sunday to keep their title hopes alive after a 1-0 defeat at Udinese last week.

Prior to Thursday's triumph, Fiorentina had won five, drawn seven and lost eight — a record which had led pundits to predict that the Fiorentina side's chances of a first crown since 1969 will be over long before the

Argentine returns in April. "Fiorentina demonstrated that it can win without my goals," said Batistuta. "Now you can stop saying that Fiorentina is Batistuta."

Manager Giovanni Trapattoni could even afford to put a question mark over the automatic selection of striker Edmundo against Roma.

The Brazilian, who controversially abandoned his injury-hit team to attend the Rio Carnival, returned to Fiorentina on Thursday and was sleeping off jet lag while Fiorentina were beating Bologna.

"Edmundo will return to work with U.S. and, if he

shows that he is in good physical condition, he will take the field against Roma," said Trapattoni.

Fiorentina will definitely be without three other first team players on Sunday — midfielder Sandro Cois and defenders Moreno Torricelli and Giulio Falcone, all suspended.

Should Edmundo play, he will feel at home because Roma manager Zdenek Zeman has indicated that he will field five Brazilians defenders Aldair, Cafu and Antonio Zago may appear alongside strikers Paolo Sergio and new signing Fabio Junior as Zeman seeks to regain the faith of

Roma's fans.

The Roma coach, already out of favour for a series of poor results, was accused of "high treason" this week after doing the unthinkable — praising city rivals and league leaders Lazio, the team he used to coach.

"I don't want to pass for a Lazio supporter," said Zeman, rushing to correct his error. "I only said that their top of the table position has given a boost to football in the Italian capital."

Whitaker says there will be no excuses

New York 1AP1 — Pernell Whitaker scoffs at suggestions he is in the autumn of a brilliant boxing career.

"I have no rust on me," said the 35-year-old Whitaker, who did not fight in 1998 because of being in drug and alcohol rehabilitation. "I don't want any excuses. There will be no excuses in this fight," the fight will be Saturday night in Madison Square Garden, and it will pit Whitaker against IBF

Welterweight Champion Felix Trinidad of Puerto Rico. "He will be trying to beat me, it's just that nobody has," said Whitaker (41-2-1, 17 knockouts), who is convinced he won losing decisions against Jose Luis Ramirez and Oscar De La Hoya and a

draw against Julio Cesar Chavez. Nobody has beaten the 26-year-old Trinidad (33-0, 28 knockouts), controversially or otherwise.

Whitaker contends he has not watched any videotapes of Trinidad's fight. But Trinidad's father, who trains his son, studied tapes of Whitaker.

"I've watched them all, especially the last one," he said.

Whitaker's last fight, his first after losing the WBC Welterweight title to De La Hoya, was a 12-round decision over Andre Pestrav. Thai win was supposed to earn Whitaker a shot at then WBA Champion Ike Quarey, but he tested positive for

cocaine and ended up in drug-alcohol rehabilitation in 1998, a year in which he also got a suspended sentence for reckless driving.

"He's still a good boxer, but the drugs and alcohol have taken their toll," the senior Trinidad said, "but Whitaker still has pride." "He's a little bit slower, but he's still strong," the champion said of Whitaker. "He has experience." Whitaker also is left-handed, but Trinidad said, "I don't think that's any problem. I've fought left-handers before." Trinidad, at 5-foot-10, also has physical advan-

tages over the 5-6 Whitaker.

So it seems to be a matter of how much age and lifestyle have cost Whitaker and has Trinidad's caliber of opposition developed to the point of his being a fighter whose ability matches his record. In seven fights in the last four years, Trinidad has fought

less than 23 full rounds.

It will be Trinidad's 12th defense of the title he won by knocking out Maurice Blocker in the second round June 19, 1993.

Whitaker will be trying to become a Welterweight champion for the second time. He also has held world

titles as a Lightweight, Junior Welterweight and Junior Middleweight the fight will be televised by HBO, but it will be preceded by a re-broadcast of WBC Welterweight Champion Oscar De La Hoya's split-decision win over Ike Quarey last Saturday in Las Vegas.

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Taleban ban production of heroin, destroy 34 labs

JALALABAD (AP) — The hardline Taleban militia Friday banned heroin production in Afghanistan and destroyed 34 heroin laboratories in a southern province.

The heroin manufacturing laboratories were destroyed in the Nangarhar province on the borders with Pakistan, Abdul Hamid Akhundzada, in charge of Taleban's drug control authority, told reporters in the provincial capital Jalalabad.

The Taleban also arrested 15 people who worked in these laboratories, he said.

There are hundreds of small laboratories in Afghanistan where raw opium is refined to produce fine-quality heroin powder.

Most laboratories are close to Pakistan through which the heroin is smuggled to Western countries.

A small laboratory can

produce 10 to 15 kilograms of heroin, worth millions of dollars, a day.

But Akhundzada said the supreme Taleban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar in an edict Friday ordered dismantling of all heroin laboratories.

The Taleban militia, which rules almost 90 per cent of the country, has moved against heroin production for the first time since it captured Kabul in 1996.

Western countries and the United Nations have often demanded for a crackdown on the heroin laboratories.

Akhundzada said after Nangarhar province, an operation against the heroin laboratories will soon be launched in the southwestern Kandahar province — which is also located on the borders with Pakistan.

The owners of heroin laboratories and people

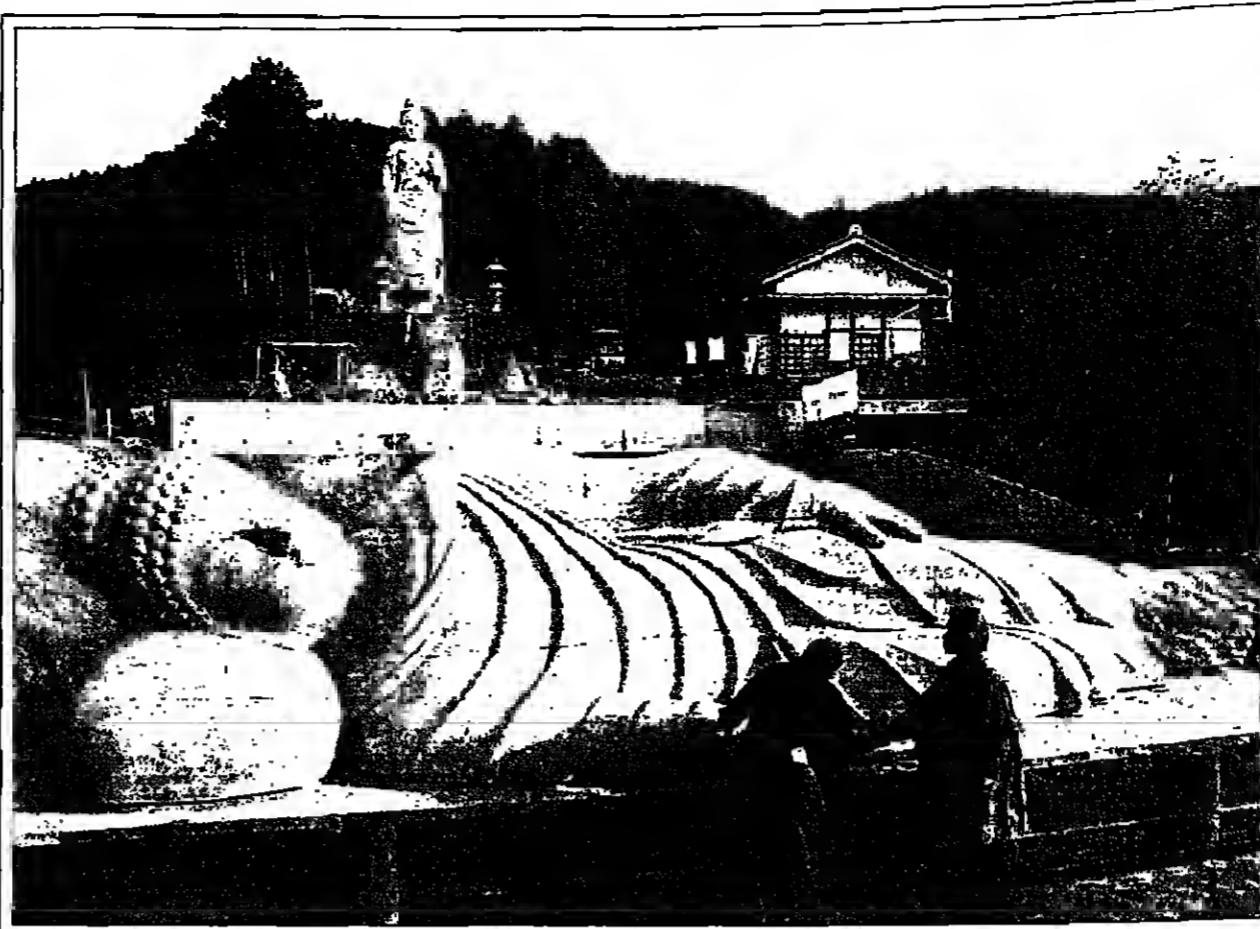
working there will be severely punished, he said. Ainullah, one of the 15 workers arrested at a heroin production laboratory, said most people are forced to do work at heroin laboratories because there is no other employment in this war-ravaged country.

"Here we earn 500 rupees a day (\$9), which is a big amount," he said.

In Afghanistan, the average salary of government employee is \$4 to \$10 per month.

The Taleban, who are Sunni Muslims and mostly Pashtun — the majority ethnic group of the country — follow a strict version of Islam.

They are fighting the northern-based opposition alliance, which comprise of religious and ethnic minorities, on several fronts in a bid to capture the remaining 10 per cent of the country.



GIANT BUDDHA AT REST: Tourists examine an eight-metre-long stone statue of Buddha in front of a 20-metre-tall stone statue of the goddess of Mercy at Takatori town in Nara prefecture, western Japan. The 30-tonne Buddha, one of nation's largest stone statues, was built by Indian and Japanese sculptors for two years to celebrate the 1,300th anniversary of the founding of Tsubosaka Temple (AP photo)

Arafat meets with Pope, renews invitation to Bethlehem

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat met with Pope John Paul II on Friday and renewed his invitation for the pontiff to visit Bethlehem in the year 2000.

Arafat is in Rome for a two-day, U.N.-sponsored conference on the Bethlehem 2000 project, an ambitious plan to spruce up the city where Christians believe Jesus was born and to jump-start tourism.

The pontiff gave his blessing to the conference Friday when he received a delegation of Bethlehem officials and he called once again for peace in the Middle East.

"Although Bethlehem's history... has often been marked by violence, the city still stands as a promise of peace and an assurance that the human hope for peace is not vain," John Paul said.

As he has before, the Pope accepted Arafat's invitation, but no date was set. It was their seventh meeting.

"I hope I can be there," the pontiff told him. John Paul has long wanted to visit the holy land but has deferred any journey because of the politically charged atmosphere of the region.

The pontiff spent 15 minutes in private conversation with Arafat, then another hour with Arafat and the conference delegation, which included the mayor of Bethlehem.

Iraq says Western planes attack sites in no-fly zones

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraqi ground forces opened fire on Western aircraft which flew sorties over the northern and southern no-fly zones in Iraq on Friday from bases in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Turkey, an Iraqi military communiqué said.

The statement quoted by the Iraqi News Agency did not report any casualties. Earlier, a U.S. military official said U.S. jets had fired two missiles at an Iraqi radar site in the northern no-fly zone.

"The murderous crowds violated our airspace today," the statement said.

It was the third time this week that Iraq reported Western planes flying sorties in the northern no-fly zone and the second time it said they violated its airspace in the south.

U.S. and British planes are patrolling the no-fly zones set up in the south to protect Shiite Muslims and the north to protect Kurds after the 1991 Gulf War.

The Iraqi statement said 12 formations flew sorties from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait at 10 a.m. local time in Basra, Muthanna and Dhi Qar provinces. Iraqi air defenses opened fire on them and "sent them fleeing to their dens of evil."

The planes included F-14s, F-15s, and F-16s supported by early warning aircraft, it said.

The statement said 11 formations "violated" Iraqi airspace in the northern no-fly zone on

Friday morning from Turkey and fired two missiles. Iraqi forces fired at the planes, it said.

The statement said that the planes flew over the northern cities of Dohuk, Erbil, Ahmadiya, Mosul, Zakhu and Rawanduz.

A U.S. military spokesman told Reuters in Ankara on Friday that the U.S. planes had fired in self-defence in the north after Iraqi radar locked on to them, but there was no damage.

"While conducting routine patrols of the no-fly zone, two U.S. F-16s launched two AGM-88 high-speed anti-radiation missiles in self-defence at a radar site," Captain Mike Blass said by telephone from U.S. European command in Germany.

The jets flew from the southern Turkish base of Incirlik.

A U.S. Defence Department spokesman at U.S. Central Command in Tampa, Florida, said he could not confirm any incidents in the southern no-fly zone.

He also said no Iraqi violations of the southern exclusion area had been reported.

U.S. Central Command overseas U.S. forces in the Gulf.

U.S. military jets conducted

New Mir crew set for blastoff on station's 13th anniversary

BAIKONUR (AP) — Russia's Mir space station will mark 13 years in orbit on Saturday, and a new three-man crew — possibly Mir's last — will lift off for the station from the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.

When Mir's first module was launched on Feb. 20, 1986, the station was expected to last only five years. It is by far the longest-lived space station, and has been running smoothly following several serious breakdowns in 1997.

Russian space professionals want to keep Mir in orbit for several more years, but it may be abandoned as early as August if the Russians can

not find private donors to pay Mir's expenses, estimated at about \$250 million a year.

Russian Viktor Afanasyev, French astronaut Jean-Pierre Haignere and Slovak Ivan Bella made final preparations Friday in advance of their Saturday morning lift-off.

Their Soyuz TM-29 capsule is scheduled to dock with Mir two days after taking off. Bella will spend eight days in space and then return to earth with Mir's current commander, Gennady Padalka.

Padalka's crewmate, Sergei Avdeyev, will stay aboard with Afanasyev and Haignere until Aug. 23.

After that, the station may

be discarded.

Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov said last month that Mir could stay in orbit for another three years — but only if private investors pay all expenses, and no one has yet to offer the money.

The U.S. space agency NASA wants the Russians to abandon Mir so Moscow can concentrate its limited resources on building the new international space station, a massive project involving 16 countries, led by the United States and Russia.

The initial parts of the new station were put into orbit at the end of last year, but no

people are expected to start living on the station until next year.

Meanwhile, Afanasyev appeared at a news conference Friday along with his crew and expressed hope that he wouldn't have to close the station.

"We are confident that our mission will not be the final one," he told reporters from behind a glass panel protecting him against possible infection.

"It would be a great pity to discard the station," Haignere, the first French astronaut to fly a six-month Mir mission, said he hopes to pass time aboard Mir by

playing the saxophone and reading the works of 19th-century science fiction writer Jules Verne.

Several other French astronauts have spent shorter stints on the station.

Afanasyev's crew is the 27th mission to Mir, which has hosted more than 100 Russian and foreign crew members since it was put into orbit.

If no money is available to send up more cosmonauts in August, mission control will fire the engines of a cargo ship attached to the station and send Mir crashing into the ocean several days after Afanasyev's crew leaves.

Netanyahu ahead of Barak, Mordechai in polls

TEL AVIV (AP) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has a narrow lead over his two main opponents ahead of May 17 elections, but could lose to either of them in a runoff, according to polls published in Israeli newspapers Friday.

A poll in the daily Yedioth Ahronot also indicated that the opposition Labour Party would be the largest in the next parliament, with 30 of the 120 seats. Netanyahu's Likud would finish second with 24. A new cen-

trist party would get 13 seats.

Polls in Yedioth and the daily Maariv show Netanyahu with a narrow lead over Labour candidate Ehud Barak, with centrist Yitzhak Mordechai far behind in third place.

In the Yedioth survey, Netanyahu leads 37 per cent to 30 per cent, and Mordechai gets 20 per cent. Maariv shows Netanyahu with 39 per cent to 36 per cent and Mordechai 14 per cent.

A runoff would be necessary

if no candidate gets 50 per cent support in the first round. It would be held June 1.

The polls do not predict a clear winner in the second round if Netanyahu faces Mordechai would defeat Netanyahu in a second round, according to both polls.

The Maariv survey, conducted by Gallup, questioned 560 Israeli adults and quoted a 4.5 per cent margin of error. The Dabaf agency interviewed 500 Israeli adults and claimed a

four per cent margin of error for Yedioth.

Israeli basketball fans voted against Netanyahu on Thursday night in the way sports fans know best. Netanyahu was loudly booed at a game in Tel Aviv.

Ten thousand people were in the stands as Israel's basketball champions played Italy's champs in the European League.

Netanyahu arrived just after the second half began.

Kurds burn Turkish flag, continue protests

(Continued from page 1)

A group of Kurdish hunger-strikers continued a peaceful vigil in front of the U.N. compound as Swiss police unrolled huge balls of barbed wire to seal off the building.

In Paris, Kurds protesting against Turkey's arrest of Ocalan occupied UNESCO headquarters near the Eiffel Tower on Friday.

Five Kurds were meanwhile remanded in custody for storming the Kenyan

embassy earlier this week when Ocalan was flown from Kenya to Turkey.

Witnesses said 20 protesters climbed on the roof of the seven-floor headquarters of UNESCO, the United Nations Educational

Scientific and Cultural Organisation, and stood on a ledge, waving Kurdish flags.

Another 400 demonstrators were held back by police outside the building, shouting anti-Turkish slogans. No one was injured.

Ocalan arrest spells 'bad news' for all involved parties

By Michael Jansen

THE ARREST of Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan is "bad news for Turkey, the Kurds, the region, everybody," asserted a Turkish writer who is running for parliament in the April election.

His detention and trial cannot but boost the position of the military within Turkey which is "bad news" for the country's democratic forces. For the army, which claims full credit for his apprehension, is now basking in popular approval and its "maroon berets," the special forces unit which carried out the operation, are regarded as national heroes. Ocalan, who has been demonised by the state-influenced media for the past two decades, is regarded by ordinary Turks as their country's public enemy number one.

The "Ocalan factor" will strengthen the army's hand in dealing with both its main antagonists, the Islamists and the Kurds. Thus, the generals can be expected to increase pressure on Turkey's civilian, political and judicial structures to tighten curbs on the Islamists, who occupy 20 per cent of the seats in parliament, constituting the largest political bloc. The army's objective would be to reduce the number

of Islamist candidates standing in the April poll or find means to exclude them from parliament altogether.

The military promptly demonstrated that it would continue its aggressive campaign to eradicate Ocalan's

ANALYSIS

Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) by detaining hundreds of its supporters in Turkey and sending troops across the border into northern Iraq with the declared aim of mopping up PKK guerrillas based there in inaccessible mountain retreats but without much hope of doing so. The real point being to keep up both military and political pressure on the PKK so it will end its 14-year insurgency and capitulate to Ankara's diktat.

But unless the Turkish politico-military establishment comes to a negotiated settlement with the country's 20 per cent Kurdish minority, granting the Kurds linguistic and cultural freedom, recognition as a separate people and a measure of regional autonomy (the very demands put forward by Ocalan over the past three years), the Kurdish struggle will continue.

Ocalan's arrest under the

watch of Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit will also be exploited to win votes for his party in the coming election. If he is returned to office he is likely to continue his uncompromising line on Cyprus, the ordered the invasion and occupation of the northern third of the island in 1974) and Turkey's dispute with Greece over the Aegean. Indeed, accusing Greece of harbouring the fugitive, Ecevit may well step up his anti-Greek line. Thus, as one Greek newspaper suggested, the Kurdish issue could be added to the list of Greco-Turkish problems.

Ankara adopted unprecedented aggressive measures to secure Ocalan. In October it massed troops along the southern border with Syria and demanded that Damascus expel Ocalan and his followers or suffer attack. Squeezed between Turkey in the north and its regional ally Israel in the south, Syria had no choice but to send Ocalan on his way.

For three and a half months he wandered in a wilderness, denied asylum by Russia, Italy, Holland and Greece because Turkey — and its global ally, the U.S. — exerted considerable political pressure on all these countries. For good measure, Ankara uttered military menaces against Greece.

Success on the Ocalan front will also encourage Turkey to follow a similar strategy when dealing with other disputes. On the regional scene, Turkey may take an even more aggressively negative stance over the sharing of the flow of the headwaters of the Tigris and Euphrates with Syria and Iraq. Since these countries depend on the two major rivers for irrigation and potable water, they could be denied even more of their rightful share than at present.

Turkey has impounded the flow from its mountains behind the huge Ataturk Dam in order to develop the southeastern region of the country in such a way as to benefit its alienated Kurdish minority. Turkey seeks to silence the Kurds with prosperity while it continues to deny their ethnic identity and political rights.

U.S. assistance in locating and nabbing Ocalan will encourage Turkey to continue to play along with Washington's game plan in Iraq. On the one hand, Turkey has made it abundantly clear that U.S. warplanes may go on overflying northern Iraq from the strategic Incirlik base. This means that Washington's low level war of attrition against Iraq's defences will continue, depriving that country of the

means to counter aggression and maintain the territorial integrity of Iraq.

On the other hand, Ankara might now grant facilities or bases to U.S.-financed Iraqi exile opposition groups seeking to overthrow President Saddam Hussein. While this would be unwelcome in the Arab World, where these groups are generally seen as having no chance of toppling the present government, Washington anti-Saddam activists could argue that the credibility of their Iraqi allies had been enhanced by Turkish support for their cause.

Turkey can also be expected to deepen its strategic defence cooperation with Israel — which, according to Kurdish sources, played a key role in locating Ocalan. Such cooperation between (or amongst) non-Arab powers in the Mashreq has never been in the Arab interest because the U.S. has either used its alignment with these non-Arab powers as a counterweight against a unified Arab front or as a means to divide and weaken the Arabs.

By capitulating to Turkish pressure and refusing Ocalan sanctuary, Europe demonstrated an amazing degree of cowardice. In consequence, Ankara may exhibit an even more aggressive stance towards the

European Union than that adopted in December 1997, when Turkey was not included in the first batch of countries slated for admission. Turkey's initial reaction was to refuse contact with the EU and to order Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktaş to boycott talks on a settlement of the Cyprus dispute.

This created a rift between Greece, who took the position that Turkey could not veto Cyprus admission, and other countries which do not want to import the Cyprus dispute into the EU.

This rift could be exacerbated if Turkey were to exert increased pressure to keep Cyprus out on Britain and Germany, two countries which already hesitate to admit Cyprus until there is a political settlement on the island. Greece, which uses accession to the EU as a means to compel Turkey to settle with Cyprus, could become isolated.

This would be a negative development for the EU as a whole and for the international community, which finds itself increasingly dominated by the surviving superpower, the U.S., which is seeking to impose its narrow national agenda on the rest of the world.

Paper to resume publication

(Continued from page 1)

PPD Director Iyad Qattan said he respected the court's decision. However, he blamed the JPA for breaking an agreement previously reached with Information Minister Nasser Judeh to refer to the association any professional violations committed by journalists.

According to the agreement, the JPA would then decide whether or not to recommend that the case be referred to the courts.

The JPA-government deal was reached in line with government pledges to implement a "soft" application of the controversial law to ease tension sparked by the previous government's heavy-handed way of dealing with violations.

"The PPD referred various cases to the JPA board which failed to take any action," the Jordan News Agency, Petra, quoted Qattan as saying on

Thursday.

"This forced the PPD to send to court the issue of Al Majd newspaper," Qattan added.

"It appears from some statements made by JPA board members that their desire to win votes in future JPA elections is standing as an obstacle in reviving the JPA law, especially re-investigating the association's disciplinary council," he said.

JPA President Seif Sherif rejected Qattan's remarks and said the association had studied all cases referred to it.

"It appears that the association's measures did not appeal to Mr. Qattan, and this is something that does not concern us as we cannot perform the role of the hangman of the press," he told Petra.

"On the contrary, we deal with laws with the view of organising general freedoms and unleashing them, not by suppressing them and acting as prosecutors of journalists."

Turk president hopes law will disarm PKK

(Continued from page 1)

A number of repentance laws, each valid for several months, have been passed over the last 10 years. The last, proposed in 1996 but not adopted, offered immunity to any guerrilla who surrendered and offered information that foiled a rebel action.

Those offering no such information would get reduced terms.

Guerrilla activity would, at least in theory, be punishable by death, though no one has been executed in Turkey since 1984. Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit said recalling parliament would be hard with campaigning under way. The conservative Motherland Party said such a law might wait until after April 18.

Ecevit announced a drive to revitalise the economy of the mainly Kurdish southeast which has been hit hard by the brutal 14-year-old conflict that has killed at least 29,000.

"Now is the time to speed up investment," he told reporters. In another development, Ecevit has implicitly confirmed outside help in the covert operation to capture Ocalan, a newspaper said Friday.

Ecevit told the national daily Hürriyet that the decision to capture Ocalan was made after Turkey was provided with information on Feb. 4 that Ocalan was in Kenya.

Ecevit did not say how the information was obtained.

When asked about the U.S. or any other country's assistance in locating Ocalan, Ecevit said: "I can't reveal that. I can't give a country name. But you can make your own guess."

Reports said that the intelligence agencies of the United States or Israel had been involved in Ocalan's capture.

Israel denied a role but Washington stopped short of an outright denial.

"The United States did not apprehend or transfer Ocalan or transport him to Turkey," State Department spokesman James P. Foley said.

He had declined comment when asked whether U.S. officials had alerted Turkey to Ocalan's whereabouts or helped in other ways.

Ocalan was snatched by Turkish special forces outside the Greek embassy residence in Nairobi, Kenya where he stayed for 12 days.

Ecevit said the team flew to Nairobi right after the tip.

Volume 24 Number

Five CIS members to abandon pact

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